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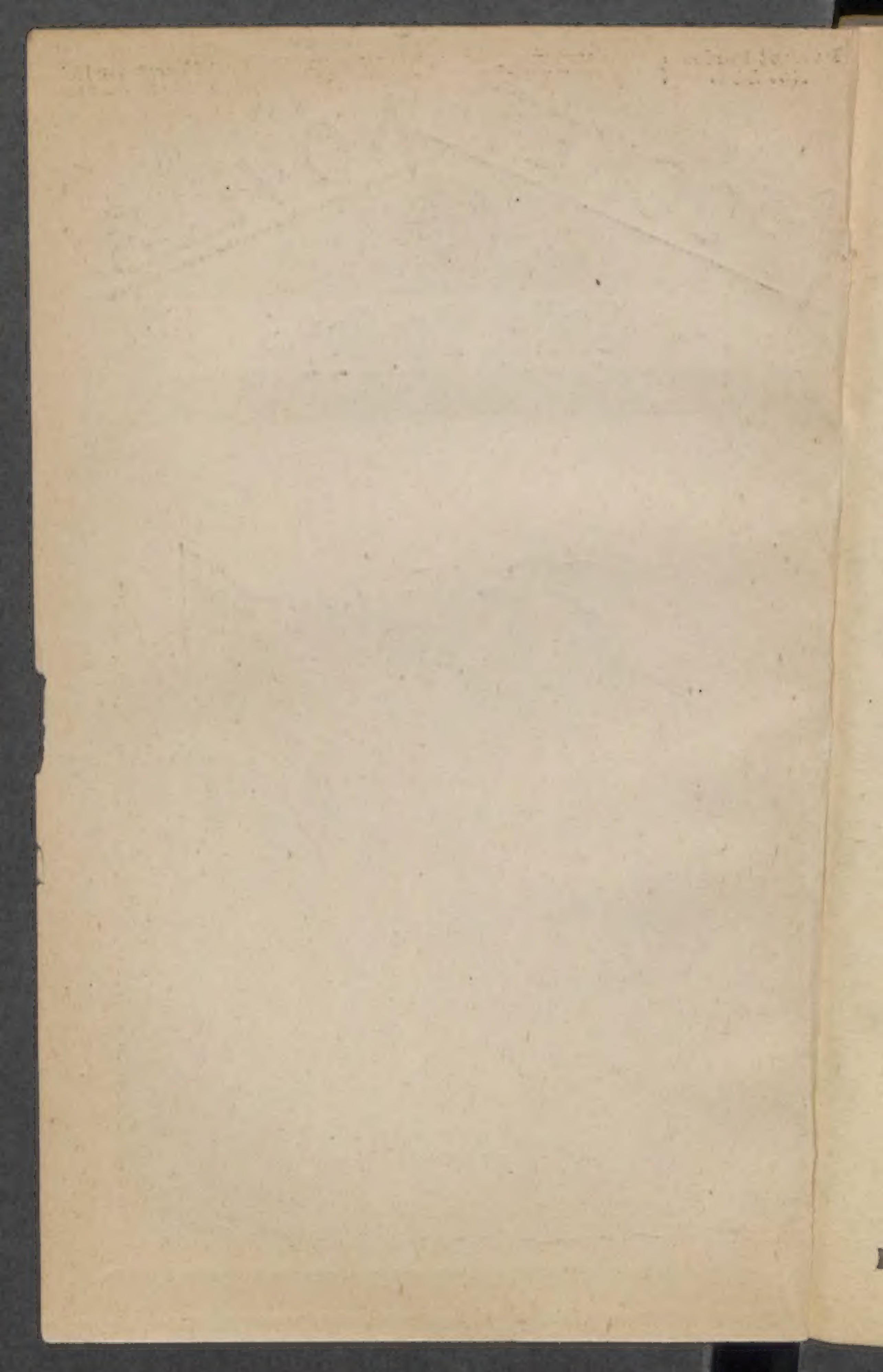
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POCKET NOVELS



Stella, the Spy.





STELLA, THE SPY.

A TALE OF THE WAR OF '76.

BY N. C. IRON.

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STELLA:

THE DAUGHTER OF LIBERTY.

CHAPTER I.

THE RECONNOISSANCE.

On the evening of a sultry day in August, in the year 1776, a lady and gentleman were discerned riding over the rugged ground between the then village of Brooklyn and those heights which traverse, like a rocky spine, from east to west of Long Island. Their route was evidently directed toward the middle pass of that portion of the elevation called Bedford Hills. The gentleman was a tall military figure, wore a sword by his side, carried pistols in his holsters, and was well mounted. The lady, attired in the elegant riding habit of the present day, then rarely used in America, sat her horse with grace and firmness.

The thoughts of the officer seemed abstracted from the beauty of his companion, who, however, found diversion in the willful gambols of her capricious steed. These equestrians, apparently influenced by different feelings, were, nevertheless, devoted to the same cause. They were brother and sister—Rufus and Stella Westville—faithful sprigs of that good old tree known to the world as the tree of liberty. Both had been sent to England for education by their guardian, where they gained many English friends and habits, but their hearts were true to the soil of their birth; and, although Rufus was intended for the army, and Stella was enjoying the rich associations of refined society, yet when the British monarch frowned upon the colonist, and vowed an oath of vengeance which eventually fell upon his own head, Rufus and Stella left the gilded fountain of their happiness and hastened to do honor to the names of their forefathers at the more humble shrine of their beloved and injured country.

Rufus was now a Captain in the American army, and was stationed at New York, where he and his sister occupied a house, a portion of their joint heritage.

As the dangers of war had become more imminent, most of the ladies and families of the officers had retired from its vicinity, and Rufus implored his sister to join some of their friends in Philadel-

phia; but Stella, inspired with the courage of her race, could not be induced to quit a city where her very presence lightened the burdens of many of those whose poverty chained them to the spot. Rufus loved his sister dearly; but he had no argument to oppose to these impressions of self-duty, and ceased to urge her further on the subject. In the intervals of leisure from military duties, Stella often accompanied her brother in his rides, and on this occasion she had prevailed upon him to permit her to cross the ferry to Brooklyn, a request rarely conceded. He was usually a pleasant and amusing companion; but deep thought was now settled on his brow, and he who would have been formerly so much delighted at the eccentric plensantries of his sister's Barb, now disregarded both horse and rider. They themselves were the only participants in the joy which they created.

Soon Rufus and Stella emerged from the woody pass and ascended a height which unfolded to their view a scene of mighty grandeur. Even the sternness on the countenance of Rufus relaxed into a smile as he gazed upon the gorgeous panorama, and with enthusiasm he exclaimed :

"Stella, what magnificence!"

At their feet lay the bay of New York, like a lustrous mirror, inclosed in the mighty frame-work of Jersey, Manhattan and Long Island. The sun was bidding farewell to earth in all the splendor of his golden beams. The tide was receding from the Sound and from the Hudson, meeting in giddy confluence as it rushed toward its parent ocean, and kissing in its flow the many islands which grace these fairy waters. Then rose Staten Island, nature's sentinel, guarding the gateway of this huge lake—a diadem in the sea—a fortress in the waters.

But the peaceful influence of this superb view was soon destroyed as brother and sister made a more minute scrutiny. In the outer harbor were reposing upon the bosom of the ocean between one and two hundred vessels of almost every design in naval architecture—from the gigantic man-of-war, rendered terrible by the rows of guns frowning from its ports, to the almost worthless transport. They formed the fleet of England, and conveyed a British army from the white cliffs of proud Albion to attempt to subjugate the colonists who dared to wish to be as free as her own people. The troops and armaments had been landed on Staten Island, their place of rendezvous, where they rested in their grandeur, displaying to their puny foe their fearful power.

The brother and sister surveyed the fleet and the island alternately. On the decks of the war vessels of the enemy the watch only was visible, while those of the transports were tenantless. The heights of the island, however, were rendered more picturesque by the white tents of the foe, who, having quitted the narrow limits of their ocean prisons, and made this delightful island their habitation,

now raised these canvas tenements in the air and exulted, in their return to land, in wild and healthful exercises.

"Those are the woodmen, Stella," said Rufus, with an expression of contempt upon his upper lip, "who, with swords and fire, have come to hew down and consume the tree our suffering fathers planted."

"Which," said Stella, "to pursue the metaphor, will prove more tenacious of life than those countless artisans imagine."

"But they are inveterate workmen, Stella," continued Rufus, "and, depend upon it, they will not retire from their fell purpose and acknowledge their defeat until they have drenched this devoted land with the blood of its patriot sons."

"Still, Rufus," said Stella, her beautiful countenance lighted with an animation that made her appear more than human, "in all history it is recorded that the price of liberty is blood. Never is this envied boon yielded by the grace of rulers. It is wrested by the sword, and so fatal is usually the struggle that the sweets which freedom give to life are rarely enjoyed by those who win them. It makes me almost regret my sex, dear Rufus, that I, like you, cannot participate in the holy contest which will render this age the glory of succeeding generations. I feel that justice is in our cause—that it is the strong arm in battle, and that a little David has arisen who, in due time, will slay this vaunting Goliath whose arrogant pennant now floats over our unconquered waters."

"It is this feeling," replied Rufus, "that arms our hearts, and renews and determines our courage when we hesitate to defy to deadly conflict the first nation of the world. Yet, dear Stella, much as our country is in want of warriors, I would not have you otherwise than sister to myself; and, indeed, considering your favorable response to certain requisitions propounded by a brilliant son of Mars, you would not happily quit so coveted an individuality and join us rough and hardy troopers."

Stella blushed deeply at this allusion of her brother, as he gazed slily on her face. She wished that her frolic Barb would practise some of his wonted curvets that she might shade the deep crimson of her face; but he was perversely stable, and seemed wholly engrossed by the attractions of the bay below his nimble feet, the vessels in the outer harbor, and the tents upon the isle—at least his fiery eyes were directed toward these novelties; so his fair mistress had to relieve the maiden shame upon her cheek by the vivacity of her tongue.

"Who dwells in yonder villa," exclaimed Stella, directing her brother's attention to a dwelling on the island, "whence that proud banner waves?"

Rufus smiled significantly. He comprehended the tactics of his darling sister, and then replied:

"Those are the quarters of General Howe, who commands the army, and who will soon lead his legions against us."

"What happy days, dear Rufus, we have passed in England!"

said Stella, the confusion having disappeared from her face, leaving an expression of pain and regret as her thoughts recurred to a happier period. "With what delight we have wandered through its grassy meadows and noble parks, rendered more lordly by its mighty oaks and antlered deer; danced on its mossy lawns; inhaled the rich perfume of its gardens; listened to the melody of the blackbird, thrush and all the numerous family of feathered warblers, as they announced the dawn of day and the approach of evening; then, when this merry staff of minstrels had sought their rest, and the fairy hours of twilight had yielded to those of darkness, with what ecstasy we have listened to the plaintive notes of the marvelous nightingale, who, despite the lateness of its concert hour, poured into the atmosphere a flood of song that was of ethereal sweetness."

"Those are pleasing recollections, Stella," said Rufus; "but it was not to those my mind reverted as I looked toward yonder hills."

"I have more poignant thoughts," said Stella, "and they press more heavily upon me now that the British legions occupy the island. I do not forget our relatives, our friends, and our associations. How dearly they loved! How kindly, liberally they treated us! And, Rufus, that some of those at whose table we have sat, of whose hospitality we have frequently partaken, may be floating beneath the pennants that so proudly wave from those ships' masts, or be preparing their arms in yonder tents—that your next meeting may be in blood—your next embrace in death."

"If my former friends are among those who seek the destruction of my country, they are now my foes," replied Rufus. "I love the soil of my birth and of my fathers, and I will uphold its banner as long as I have life. If friend or relative come in the ranks of a hostile army to draw the sword against the sacred rights of my native land, he shall find me an uncompromising antagonist."

"Yes, Rufus, you are my noble brother," said Stella, with great emotion—"a true son of liberty; and I, by a few acts of kindness, have endeavored to be deserving as a daughter, although the achievements of a poor sister can never cast much brightness on your name."

"Indeed, Stella," said Rufus, "you shed a greater luster than you suppose. Those 'few acts of kindness' have not escaped the keen and observant eye of General Washington, who, only yesterday, complimented me on the illustrious conduct of my sister in administering to the wants of some, allaying the fears and terrors of others, and of relieving him, by her influence and her example, from importunities to which he could not listen without pain, because he had no power to grant their prayers. But I must hasten away. You have seen this terrible enemy, Stella, and now let us turn our backs upon him, for to-day I am allowed that privilege without the charge of cowardice."

Rufus and Stella turned the heads of their horses and commenced

to retrace the road which they had passed. Both now were thoughtful. At length Stella said :

"Were not some of the soldiery removing their tents?"

"I perceived nothing of the kind," replied Rufus. "You must be mistaken, Stella."

But further conversation was interrupted by the approach of a horseman. He was riding rapidly, and as he wore a military costume, Rufus regarded him with great curiosity. He was too distant to be more than merely distinguished; but as he approached, the quick eye of Stella detected him, and she exclaimed :

"Why, it is Percy Archer!"

"You exceed me in the power of recognition," said Rufus, smiling.

Stella blushed slightly at the perspicuity of her vision, not that there was any cause for shame in the acuteness of this faculty, but there was an archness in the look and words of her brother which made her think that he felt no astonishment at her so plainly discerning what was impossible in him. The horseman advanced. Stella was correct—it was Percy Archer. He was a handsome, soldierly man, with expansive forehead, slightly Roman nose, fine gray eyes, and rather long visage. He came forward with a smiling face, evidently pleased to encounter such society.

"A jewel in the wilderness," he exclaimed, as he raised his cap to Stella, and then grasped her tiny hand, "which affords rare luster to such a dreary ride."

"But what causes this haste in you, Percy?" demanded the impatient Rufus.

"I am in search of the enemy," replied Percy.

"Well, you will find him beyond those hills—his vessels sleeping on the waters which surround the island, and himself idling beneath his tents. Possibly this information will enable you to join us and return."

"Indeed, I can not," replied Percy; "I must hasten on. It is said that the enemy has struck his tents, and is even now landing on this island."

"It is impossible that such a movement should escape my notice," said Rufus.

"Perhaps the information is exaggerated," said Percy, "or only affects a small detachment, which might be beyond your view. I must ride on—the General charged me to be quick. Forgive me, Stella," he continued, addressing her in a lower voice, "this rough greeting. You are now between a soldier and his duty, who—"

"Percy," said Stella, with a smile, while she at the same time backed her steed and left open the road before him, "say not another word. My best wishes attend you; but the road is dangerous; let me entreat you to guard against it."

"I must accompany you, Percy," said Rufus. "Stella, ride

within the redoubt and await our return. You will be in perfect safety there."

Stella indicated her willingness, and the friends rode on. Her horse, however, did not like this separation; and, while he pawed the air with his foot, his mistress discussed whether to yield obedience to her brother's wishes or to gratify her own. Although she had just quitted the scene to which the journey of Percy and her brother was directed, where all seemed tranquil, she could not divest her mind of the impression that there was some design beneath this assumed repose, and that the consequence might be visited on those two bold cavaliers on whom all her happiness depended. The painful feeling so strengthened in her breast that she resolved to follow them; and giving her willing Barb the rein, with a throbbing heart she flew with the swiftness of an arrow toward the pass.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAPTURE AND THE RESCUE.

PERCY ARCHER was a bold and gallant Virginian, with such a soul as Old Dominion at that time put into her sons. With his large and generous heart he loved the world; but for his dear native country he had a devotion he could not afford to other climes. He was too noble and manly to oppress or live beneath oppression, and when he saw that it was necessary to draw the sword or succumb to the haughty injustice of the British monarch, he joined the patriot army, and was now Major of as gallant a regiment as ever withstood a foe. General Washington, who knew well his lion-hearted race, esteemed him as a very promising soldier, and the youthful warrior venerated every order of the General. In very early youth Percy and Stella had been friends; nor had distance, nor the many years of absence, lessened the impression of her loveliness on his heart. And Stella, though surrounded by the gay and attractive flatterers of another land, did not forget the boyish devotion of the handsome Virginian. When Percy heard that Rufus, with chivalric faithfulness, had returned to the aid of his native land—that his noble friend had quitted the luxuries of England to share the hardships and dangers of America—he hastened to be early in his greetings, and to his astonishment encountered Stella, grown into loveliness far exceeding the image in his heart, and so accomplished that he feared such surpassing qualities would never assimilate with the rough but frank and manly manners of a soldier. He soon found, however, that she was America's true daughter, though England's

pupil; that his ample heart had admitted another love as well as that of his country, and he could enjoy no more happiness until he had extracted a secret from Stella's breast which she could not in truth conceal.

On the occasion of the meeting between Percy, and Rufus and Stella, the former had been dispatched by Washington to ascertain if the enemy was making any such movement as had been reported. The interview was necessarily brief, as the utmost rapidity was desirable. As the friends parted from Stella, they rode with all the speed of their horses toward the pass, that Percy might regain even the few minutes he had spared in conversation. They soon came upon those heights which afforded them a view of the island and the vessels. The tents of the enemy still whitened the horizon, and nothing indicated any intention to change their position. Still as they commanded only a partial view of the coast, they determined to proceed and reconnoiter those points hitherto unobserved.

They rode on at great speed without uttering any other observations than those in reference to the ruggedness of the path. No sound was heard but the panting of their steeds and the heavy tread of their feet upon the sward, when suddenly, Percy exclaimed, without reining in his horse :

"Hark, Rufus, is not that the splash of oars?"

"I hear nothing, Percy," replied Rufus, "but the noise of our horses."

"It was repeated even while you spoke," said Percy, in an excited tone.

"Then let us dismount, leave our horses in the copse, and scramble up this height, which will afford us an extensive view," suggested Rufus.

They leaped from their horses, secured them, and had just emerged from the woods, when both heard the sound of voices.

"The enemy is landing, Rufus," ejaculated Percy; "let us up here, take one glimpse at them, and then to the General."

They rushed up the rugged height, and before reaching the summit, threw themselves on the ground, crept to the highest point, where, pushing their heads through the tall grass, they looked down upon the beach. Both were startled at the picture. Several hundred soldiers had landed, and boats still continued to arrive. They were fully armed, provided with rations, and regarded their position with the utmost indifference. They were standing, lying and sitting, and all merrily talking, as if they were in perfect security, and had landed for enjoyment on a friendly coast.

"I must rise," said Percy, "or the cool effrontery of these men will overcome my prudence."

"I never heard of such a debarkation," rejoined Rufus; "not a sentinel posted on the heights."

"Your pardon, gentlemen, you are wrong," said a strange voice;

then, before they could recover from their astonishment and rise to their feet, the same voice exclaimed in military command :

" Soldiers, make ready, present ! "

The movement of firearms was heard, and then there was a deadly pause—no sound but the motion of the brushwood which was fanned by the breeze from the Atlantic—and when the friends rose from the ground, their eyes looked directly into the muzzles of six muskets. Midway between themselves and the soldiers, who were thus prepared to deliver a deadly volley, stood a tall non-commissioned officer, with a drawn sword and formidable aspect. After the gallant Sergeant—for that was his rank—had allowed Percy and Rufus to contemplate the nature of his preparations and their utter helplessness, he said :

" Gentlemen, do you yield as prisoners of war ? "

It was a bitter question to these young officers, who were in all the fire of youth—in all the energy of patriotic feeling—to be thus ignominiously seized, before they could strike a blow. They could not respond. They looked imploringly and despairingly around. On either side and behind were the perpendicular sides of the cliff on which they stood, and which conducted to the enemy on the beach; in front was the merciless platoon with loaded muskets. The Sergeant allowed them time to consider their situation; but he saw their despondency.

" Gentlemen," he said, " do you yield ? "

" To whom ? " asked Rufus.

" To Sergeant Jeopardy Seroggins, of his majesty's"—and he touched his cap in reverence—" Fiftieth foot."

" What is the alternative ? " asked Percy.

" Death ! " exclaimed this uncompromising disciplinarian.

" We yield," said Rufus and Percy.

" Gentlemen," continued the Sergeant, still immovable, " I have to request your paroles to join our forces on the beach."

" We will not be thus chained to engagements," said Percy, " if we be your prisoners, march us to your camp; we will do nothing voluntarily."

" Well, well," cried the Sergeant, good-naturedly, " it shall never be said that Sergeant Jeopardy Seroggins, of the Fiftieth, denied quarter to a prostrate enemy." Then, addressing himself to his men, he vociferated : " Recover arms ! " and the deadly muskets were thus removed from the level of their prisoners' hearts.

The friends now breathed more freely, and made more minute observations of their position. The soldiers stood like statues, moving nothing but their eyes, with which they watched every motion of their prisoners. The Sergeant had removed nearer to his face. He was a tall, straight, hardy man, and had evidently seen much service. He seemed aware of the deference due to officer, and, though bent on the security of his captives, he would not display any undue

haste. After a time he approached Percy and Rufus, and giving the military salute, he said :

" Gentlemen, the chances of war have placed you in my power. You are the first specimens of the enemy yet taken, and two finer officers can not head a regiment. May I ask the honor of your names ? "

" I am Major Archer," said Percy.

" And I am Captain Westville," said Rufus.

" Gentlemen, you have my sympathy," said the Sergeant, " and I would have rather taken you in the field than within our picket."

" Within your picket ? " exclaimed both Percy and Rufus, in alarm. " We passed no sentinel—our object was to reconnoiter."

The Sergeant, however, made no reply to this observation; but, as Percy and Rufus had declined to give their parole, he prepared to march them in secure custody. He placed two of his men in front, one on each side and two in the rear of his prisoners, and with his guard thus disposed, gave the order to move forward. With all their bright hopes dashed into darkness, with breasts torn with agony, these almost frantic captives proceeded step by step toward a leclivity which led to the British camp upon the beach.

In the meanwhile, Stella, mistrusting the security of the road, which, up to the moment that Percy and Rufus had pursued it alone, had seemed so safe, coursed along the unlevled plain with all the energy of her willing steed. She saw the friends ascend the height whence she had viewed the enemy, then, as if eager for a nearer scrutiny than the hill afforded, they recommenced their journey toward the beach before she could rejoin them.

" Fly, fly, my good Barb," exclaimed Stella, " for my heart mistrusts me that there is danger to Percy and my brother."

The faithful horse put forth his wondrous powers, and endeavored to outrun the wind beside him; but despite these noble efforts in the chase, Percy and Rufus disappeared behind some trees, and when Stella reached the spot they were not to be seen. She reined in her tireless Barb, thought for a single moment, then plunged into the wood on the margin of which she perceived the imprint of a horse's feet. She threaded the many trees until she discovered the tethered steeds. Then riding to the edge of the wood at a different point from that at which she had entered, she discovered Percy and her brother clambering up a bluff at a short distance, and when they had nearly reached the summit they cast themselves on the earth, as if to look from its height in greater ease.

All around had the tranquillity of peace. The sun had sunk below the horizon, the gloom of evening was descending, and the fears of Stella began to subside, when she saw, rising from a hollow behind those dear objects of her care, who were still prostrate on the earth, some very ominous glittering bayonets, then some military caps, then the heads which fitted them, and next the royal scarlet of the enemy. It was a file of the British, commanded by a no-

commissioned officer. They made their appearance about half way up the bluff on which Percy and Rufus still reclined, and as they came into full view, Stella observed that by some sign, for no word was uttered, the men wheeled toward the summit of the precipice, and now held her brother and her devoted Percy at their mercy.

The blood rushed back upon her heart, and left her face cold and livid as marble. She clasped her hands and held them in supplication toward Heaven, but could not follow them upward with her eyes, for they were on the tableau in the distance. A voice addressed her; but she was deaf to the sense of hearing. A finger pressed her elbow; but she was impervious to a touch so gentle. The faculties of her mind were absorbed in one great terror.

"Lady," exclaimed a voice, determined to be heard, and at the same time a firm hand grasped her arm, "Lady, you are ill—you are agitated—I am a soldier, and will assist you."

The word "soldier," was one of enchantment to her ear. She withdrew her eye from its fascination, she regarded the speaker, recognized the uniform of the American army, and exclaimed:

"Two of your comrades—officers—young, brave, and dear to me and to your country—are the prisoners of the British, who are about to shoot them."

The soldier, who was an officer in a rifle brigade, regarded this appeal as the raving of a distempered mind. He could see nothing of what was transpiring where he stood, in consequence of the underwood in front; but, seated on her horse, Stella looked over this, and she now implored him so earnestly to mount a tree, that he did so. In a moment he comprehended the imminence of the danger of his brother officers.

"Young lady, I will not now apologize for my rudeness—every moment is of value. I see the peril of those gentlemen and the remedy. You are well mounted. If you can act with coolness and decision I will save them—if you yield to these helpless lamentations, it will tend to disarm me."

"Sir," said Stella, grasping the hand of the officer, "your words endow me with life, while the hand of death is on my heart. Most joyfully will I follow your commands. My horse is equal to any duty, and I will be a faithful subaltern."

Pursuing nearly a direct course," said the officer, "about half a mile from here, some of my men are bivouacked. Tell six of them to approach in the most stealthy manner to the underwood on the margin of the bluff that overlooks the beach. Let them arm lightly. They need no muskets—they will be provided by the enemy. I will meet them there. Now, young lady, hasten on your errand! Ride back again; skirt those woods to the right, and make your appearance fearlessly in front of the bluff, that so rare a vision may lessen the attention which those gentlemen in scarlet may bestow upon our operations. With diligence on all sides, your friends will be at liberty in half an hour. Should my men not arrive in the time to par-

ticipate in the rescue, do not believe me without other device. I trust we shall meet again in triumph."

The officer and Stella pursued their separate routes. The soldiers were discovered by Stella and were no sooner made aware of the command of their Captain, than they were striking through the forest toward the place of rendezvous. In the mean while, Stella retraced her steps, followed the course directed by the officer and debouched upon the open space in front of the bluff, just as Percy and her brother, guarded by the British, were about to turn down the declivity to embark at the beach. The prisoners, amazed at this sudden appearance in the face of danger of one whom they considered so distant and so safe, paused in their descent. The Sergeant and his men, partaking of the surprise, sympathized in the halt, although in the perfection of their discipline they continued to move their feet as if upon the march. Stella, adhering strictly to directions, rode forward at a walking pace, seemingly indifferent at what she saw, though her eyes were straining to perceive the hope that was not then in view.

Presently, however, there was a gentle movement of the bushes in the rear of the soldiers as if they were disturbed by the air that came refreshingly from the Atlantic; and then to her alone were visible the forms of men. The officer—for it was he and bold his followers—as he emerged from his leafy shelter, placed a finger hastily on his lips to impress on her the importance of silence as well as self-possession. Stella then saw this hidden little band, led by their wary chief—on whose success rested their lives, the lives of those she loved, and, probably, her own—pass stealthily toward the unsuspecting foe. Her feelings were intensely terrible, and she felt wholly unequal to the drama that seemed preparing. Her happiness—the feeling of her young heart—was centered in the efforts of another minute, which a glimpse of one of those stern soldiers might dispel.

At this crisis a love of gambol seized her capricious steed. He leaped into the air, and while the eyes of the soldiers were riveted on these unusual pranks, Stella saw a rush, an alixture of scarlet and green among the men, then confused wrestling, then a separation, and then—oh, victory to the joyous love of Stella!—the Greens formed in line with arms in their hands in front of the Scarlet-eats, who were now the prisoners. The attack had been boldly conceived and dexterously achieved. Every one of the British was disarmed except the Sergeant, who had been so violently hurled to the ground as to be rendered, for a time, insensible. Percy and Rufus recognized the uniform, and were as much delighted at the daring exploit as at their own liberty. They ranged themselves in line with the heroic commander.

The discomfited Sergeant recovered his consciousness and rose from the earth. There was a clou upon his brow as he hastily surveyed the defenseless condition of his men. He was a dauntless fellow,

had heard his rivals greatly underrate him, and therefore did not despair of regaining what he had so shamefully lost.

" Soldiers," he vociferated, as he stepped before his men, and waved his sword in the air, " let us show these people what we can do without our muskets. Advance and recover your arms!"

The men hesitated. They knew the deadly charge their arms contained, and the glittering bayonets, directed by powerful arms, were nearly at their breasts. The Sergeant, however, still cried out " Advance," and was about to precipitate himself upon the Americans, when Percy stepped forward, exclaiming :

" Brave Englishman, accident has placed me and my friend in your power—a rival incident has released us from it. Let the rescue be as bloodless as the capture. The soldiers of my gallant friend are as fearless as your own; but, with arms in their hands, are trebly your match. If, therefore, you advance, you die. If you refrain, you are at liberty to return to your camp."

The Sergeant curbed his impetuosity at these words of Percy. He regarded the conditions offered as honorable under the circumstances; still he felt the humiliation acutely.

" I accept the terms," he said, in reply. Then exclaiming, " Fall in, men!" he added, addressing himself to Percy and Rufus : " If this be a sample of your army, we shall have stouter work than our officers have promised us; but I would rather meet a bold enemy than a cowardly one, especially as it will require some valor to blot out from the memory of the regiment the day when Sergeant Jeopardy Seroggins lost six stand of arms without firing a ball."

The defeated Sergeant marched his soldiers hastily toward the beach, to report to his listless officers the catastrophe which had occurred upon the hill.

As the Sergeant disappeared, Percy seized the hand of the officer who had effected his liberation.

" I can not sufficiently extol the daring adventure by which I and my friend are again free and restored to the service of my country. No words can express one-half of what I feel. You have knocked from my limbs the fetters of imprisonment before they were endared an hour. Yet that little space in time was almost an age in suffering. It is like stepping from death to life."

Before the officer could reply, Stella and Rufus came up the former still mounted, but greatly excited, which was evident from the tears still glittering in her eyes. She caught the officer by the hand.

" There are feelings," she said, " which are the property of the heart. They seem too pure for words. They flow from my eyes in tears. I have no words to express my appreciation of your services. Your generous courage has restored to happiness and to life myself, my brother, and—"

" My dear young lady," interposed the officer, in some agitation despite his endeavors to conceal it, " you overrate a soldier's services. His life is one of daring. He lives upon such adventures as you have

witnessed. It is food to the appetite created by his profession, and he would scarcely think his uniform unsullied if his life was not in danger once or twice each week. I am proud that I have delivered from bondage two such able coadjutors in the defense of my dear country as these worthy friends, and that their freedom has rendered solace to your heart; but, when I behold these laurels—the nest-lets of the foe—which now garnish the arms of my bold followers, think, my dear lady, we owe our gratitude to you for affording us the clue to such a victory."

The officer forestalled further demonstrations by intimating that a detachment of the enemy would be immediately sent in pursuit, and therefore suggested a retreat. The party directed their course to the point where the horses of Percy and Rufus were tethered. There they separated, Stella and her brother and Percy retracing the road which led to Brooklyn, and the officer and his men returning to their little encampment.

It was now quite dark, and even Barb had become prudent and sober in his paces. The friends were constrained to proceed very slowly over the broken plain. Rufus considerately led the way, leaving Percy and Stella to follow in the rear, who were far more indebted to the sagacity of their horses than the care of their own guidance for the safety of their travel.

CHAPTER III.

PREPARING FOR THE FRAY.

WHEN the friends returned to New York, the city was greatly excited. Intelligence had preceded them of the landing of the British, accompanied by such wild reports as appalled the unthinking. Mothers were rushing through the streets imploring the authorities for assistance they could not yield, while the children re-echoed the despair of their parents in tears and screams. The timid trader, less noisy in his fear, though no less intent on flight, was seen in meek intercession with the carman to convey his goods from the scene of danger, whose oblivious nature, penetrating the alarm which his suppliant was wishful to conceal, yielded only to a hire which n'tle one-half the goods his own. Detachments of soldiers were marching to and fro; messengers were hastening from place to place; drums were beating; trumpets were sounding; guns were firing; thieves, like hungry wolves, were prowling about the streets and lanes, seeking their repast amid this chaos. Still, from the trenches uprose the sound of the mattock and the spade, and the glittering lights showed the thousands who were still busy in defense.

the commanders urging the men to make their works yet stronger with the iron band of their labor.

Percy, astounded at the commotion in the city, hastened to headquarters, while Rufus and Stella pursued the way to their residence. At the entrance to their dwelling stood two negro slaves—a male and female. They had been born in the family, and were presented to them when only three years of age, in conformity with a custom toward the children of the house. Thus Caesar had become the slave of Rufus, and Chloe that of Stella. Devoted to their young owners, they now greeted their return by an ample exhibition of polished ivory.

"Oh, Miss Ruf!" exclaimed the delighted Caesar, as he grasped the horse's rein.

"Oh, Miss Stel!" vociferated Chloe, with equal joy; "dem Britishers am cum-dey be here dis night. Oh, wherebber shall we go—wherebber shall we go?" and tears poured from the poor slave's eyes.

"It is folly, Chloe," said Stella. "There is no occasion for the alarm people manifest. There is no immediate danger. The British will not be here to night. I have seen the English. I have been close to their encampment."

Poor Chloe had formed a frightful idea of those terrible islanders, who had been so long dreaded, and whose approach caused such dismay throughout the city. She knew that their tents had long whitened the horizon of the harbor, and that they had arrived in ships so numerous as far to exceed the powers of her arithmetic. That a lady so young and beautiful as her mistress should venture near enough to see those giant people was almost incredible, especially when she witnessed the frantic ravings in the streets that night of the white people who had only heard of the enemy's approach. Having entered the house, Rufus prepared to hurry away.

"I cannot delay my departure an instant, my dear Stella," said her brother. "I must join my regiment. Now will commence the struggle."

"There are duties, too, incumbent upon me," replied Stella. "I must go forth into these troubled streets and endeavor to calm this storm of cowardice. Our city must not ring with the lamentations of women while brave men are making every effort to defend them."

"Right, Stella," said Rufus. "This piteous wail of women and their children ought to be suppressed. It sallens the hearts of our brave fellows, and may lessen their ardor for the coming battle."

The brother and sister separated. Stella then, attired in a walking dress, summoned Chloe to attend her. She saw the dejection of her slave, but only bid her follow, trusting that she would imbibe a lesson in the sequel. Then the heroic girl repaired to these districts where the excitement was most intense, among the poorest

classes. She was known, respected, and her coming was heralded as that of one who ever brought comfort.

"My dear friends," commenced Stella, "why do you add this clamor to the horrors of an eventful night? Is there nothing more worthy of American matrons and daughters at this frightful crisis than groans? Are you emulous to withdraw yourselves from a danger pending over all? Are wives anxious to leave their husbands, and sisters their brothers, before they are prostrate, wounded and dying upon the battle-field, when they will need most care? I was urged, entreated, to quit the dangers of this city before the strife began, but I resisted the importunities. I know that hundreds of our countrymen must succumb to the penalties of war, and, as I can not enter the battle-field as a son of liberty, I am resolved to attend the hospitals as a daughter. Look into your hearts. Ask what must be the feelings of distant mothers and wives and sisters, to think of their devoted sons, husbands, or brothers sinking beneath their wounds for the want of the tender care of woman, and what blessings you would earn by contributing to the comfort of these bleeding patriots. Indulge, then, no longer in the coward thoughts that give rise to sorrow, but imitate in endurance the men whom you now see working in the trenches, and whose duty it may be to fight in the ranks of liberty to-morrow. The enemy is not so terrible nor so irresistible as you imagine. I have seen this formidable antagonist in his camp in Gravesend Bay. There he still lies. More I have to tell. The first battle has been fought, and the Americans are triumphant. My brother and Major Archer, were taken prisoners, were being marched to the enemy's camp, when an equal number of Americans, unarmed, rushed upon the British guard, struggled with them, seized their arms, rescued the two officers, and marched off the ground in triumph, bearing the muskets of the foe. I saw the battle fought. It was a valiant deed, and while I tell it you, I supplicate that you repay such achievements with your gratitude, your approbation, and your aid in case of need."

The sweet voice of Stella was magical. Smiles could be seen upon those faces so recently distorted by grief. The first battle had been fought and won! The feeling charmed their hearts, and numbers now approached Stella to seize her hand, and to assure her that her advice should be their guide. Stella was not less pleased than her disciples, for by her teachings she had not only given peace to many broken hearts, but eventually restored comparative quietude to the female and juvenile population of the city.

Chloe was not the least attentive listener. Her narrow faculties strained at the meaning of every sentence, and she thought she comprehended the moral of the whole. But while she admired the marvelous power the words of her beautiful mistress had obtained over this weeping and noisy multitude, she wondered by what inflection of speech it was that made the tears to rush from her own eyes, and her heart to leap and bound, when those of the white people around

were softened into smiles, and their sorrow was converted into joy. She could only think that the difference in effect arose from a dissimilarity in color. She did not imagine that the emotion sprung from a purer love which filled her ebony heart.

No one retired to bed that night—soldier or civilian—mother or daughter. Houses were little occupied; all were anxiously looking out upon the waters to see if the British ships were coming up the bay, and, as the vision was as distorted as the mind, Governor's and Belloe's islands were many times reported to be the flag-ship of the enemy's fleet.

Stella awaited anxiously the return of Rufus, from whom she hoped to hear something of the movements of the army, while Child and Caesar sat in the kitchen discussing the excitements of the night. The former so represented the rescue affair to the latter, that on the following morning, Caesar was busy relating to those who would listen to him how a mighty battle had been fought on Long Island between the Americans and the British, the former without their muskets, the latter armed to the teeth, and how the Americans came off in triumph, capturing the enemy's arms and baggage.

Toward morning Rufus returned. It was to take a hasty farewell of his sister. He was ordered to Long Island, and might not again see her until he had passed through the ordeal of battle. He had not seen Percy. Both were deeply affected. They embraced, promised to meet again if possible that day, and separated.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTIC VISITOR.

On reaching head-quarters, Percy Archer accounted for his delay by relating his narrow escape. He was scarcely congratulated upon his deliverance, so great was the confusion occasioned by the flight of the British, attended, as it was, by the suspicion that the manoeuvre was a feint of the enemy to withdraw attention from an attack intended upon New York.

Percy received instant orders to proceed along the whole coast of Manhattan Island; to urge the strictest watch; to double the sentinels at every point, and to inspire the soldiery with a will to discharge the duties of men and patriots. He gladly undertook the onerous duty, rode along the line, announced the approaching conflict, and impressed upon the sentinels the necessity of the utmost vigilance. He also endeavored to cheer their lonely guard, and excite their emulation by narrating the incident which had occurred to

In that evening, and how gallantly the daring riflemen disarmed the British. It was a grateful episode upon the eve of battle, and gave to their hearts an ardency which made them long to rival such bold deeds.

It was after midnight before Percy had visited all the posts, and being well assured that the shore was scrupulously guarded, he directed his course toward the city. The night was dark, the road was perilous and dreary, and his progress was necessarily slow. Impatient at the impediment when every moment seemed an hour, he leaped from his horse, hoping by walking to accelerate his speed; but, he had undervalued the sagacity of his steed, which was by far the most accomplished pioneer. The roughness of the path did not, however, entirely occupy the mind of Percy. His thoughts reverted to a comparison between the troops which he had just visited and those whom he had seen assembled on the beach at Gravesend, which was really disparaging to the men vaunted to defend the liberties of his country. As he walked and pondered by what strategy this weakness might be counterbalanced, he suddenly perceived that he was not alone—that, on a narrow path, where the darkness was made more gloomy by trees on either side, a companion had stealthily joined him and now walked silently by his side. Percy began to scrutinize this speechless figure, as well as the night permitted. In stature it was tall, and was enveloped in a robe which descended to the feet. Upon its head was nothing but its hair, which was white, and hung down upon its shoulders. He could see no more until they came to an open glade where there was increased light. Then Percy was appalled. The blood chilled in his veins—his hair stood erect in horror at the ghastliness of this fell associate. Its nose was short as if deprived of the cartilage, its facial bones projected, while its cheeks receded deep in the hollow of its teeth, showing the bony structure of the jaws. Its lips, the mere thickness of the skin, seemed fitted to the teeth. It was like the impersonation of Death, who, attempting a disguise, had introduced his skeleton frame into a human skin, rendering his fleshless bones a thousand times more frightful.

Percy had paused and receded a step or two as he contemplated this specter, which now confronted him. His utterance was suspended, and, though his courage was still sustained, he could not dismiss the terrible conviction that he was in the presence of the reanimated dead. The specter now raised his hand, which, to Percy, was as unearthly as his head, and pointed toward the course that Percy was pursuing, as if it wished not to interrupt the journey; but the gallant Major had his prejudices against renewing travel in such equivocal society. He would not say so—his tongue would not permit him—it positively refused to articulate; still, he hoped the ghostly form who thus delivered injunctions with his hand, would remember the unconquerable repugnance that existed between the quick and dead. But this grim counsellor, heedless of what was passing in the mind

of Percy, again, and more impatiently pointed toward the road and took a step in advance. Then, seeing that his gestures had no effect, it said :

" You are a bold soldier, but a timid man."

This language was too plainly insulting to the warm blood of Percy. It restored speech to his tongue, and he replied :

" I am not less a man than a true soldier, and will defend my honor even against the grave."

The specter gave a hideous and contemptuous smile, and then exclaimed :

" The grave is not troubled with the willfulness of boys; but enough,—your stagnant blood is refreshed; proceed, our courses lie in the same direction."

" First tell me who and what you are," said Percy.

There was a glare from those unmeaning eyes that, for the moment, to Percy's imagination, lighted the immediate region of his head.

" I am a mystery to myself and to the world," said the specter. " I am he who walks in the dark at the fell hour of night, when bats come forth from their damp and gloomy holes, when reptiles croak, and when fierce animals howl through the wilderness in search of prey, and strew my path with blood. I am he who, like the eagle and the vulture, and the lesser feathered monsters of the air, scent blood from afar and hasten to the banquet. I am he who lived in past generations, who lives in this; for my existence depends on circumstances and not on years. I love your cause; it is that of freedom to yourselves; and eventually to the world. It is catholic in its nature, pungent in flavor, and must be triumphant in its issue."

Percy listened in astonishment to these extraordinary words. The eyes of the speaker flashed with unnatural brilliancy, until he alluded to the pending struggle. Then the frantic energy left his eye and his voice, and he spoke as if his soul was deep in the interest of America. Percy led forward his horse, and the fearful stranger again placed himself so that they walked on side by side.

" I learn nothing," resumed Percy, " from what you have said, but that you are the friend of my country."

" Is not that enough, young Archer?" rejoined the specter, to the amazement of Percy. " Is not that enough, when that country is also mine and my heritage is there? Know you the thousands of patriots who have assembled to fight the battles of the State?"

" But you approach me in so eccentric a manner," said Percy; " in the dead of night, in the loneliness of this dense forest, at a time when man's suspicions are awakened by enemies around."

" You found those sentinels steady to their duty?" interposed the specter, disregarding the observations of Percy, who, feeling indignant, did not reply.

" I roused their sleepy nodules long before your visit," he continued, " although I knew and know that the British will not attack

New York until after they have possession of Long Island; but I want to accustom the knaves to vigilance."

"Why do you thus predict the success of the English at Long Island?" asked Percy.

"As men bet on races who see the runners," said the specter, "so do I judge a battle by the fighters:—the British have two to one."

"Have you penetrated the British camp?" asked Percy.

"Trouble me not," thundered the specter, in impatience, "with these inquiries. Have I not the enemy in my eye, landing his troops throughout the night? They even now extend up the country far beyond the bluff where you and your friend were so prettily entrapped among the brambles."

"Whence obtained you that knowledge?" asked Percy.

"Whence, indeed!" exclaimed the specter, in contempt. "It is my power—my gift of wisdom, which I wield for good. Was it not a giant force that influenced the mind of the charming Stella Westville, with the presentiment that the road which she had just travelled with such safety was perilous to you, so that she followed you and Rufus, and rescued you from becoming prisoners?"

Percy pondered with amazement on these words of the gaunt stranger. They seemed to infer that he was a mystic agent in the conduct of Stella, and, although Percy rejected this as too absurd, he dared not to question its truth in the awful presence of the specter, who continued to walk beside him with celerity and ease, while both he and his horse were impelled by the ruggedness of the path at almost every step.

"To-morrow will be a day of preparation," continued the specter. "Howe will land in person. There will be no fighting; but, the next day the grassy plain will be dyed with blood. Your courage will be needed. Do your duty. However appalling, sustain your cause. Fight dauntlessly, and with hope; and, even though the sword be at your heart, a greater power than that of the enemy shall make him *your victim*."

"I need no instruction in my path of duty," ventured Percy, in an undertone.

"Reject no counsel, rash youth," exclaimed the specter, in a severe tone, "especially when proffered by one who has witnessed the errors of forgotten ages. You ask for liberty. It is a peerless jewel; but a price is set upon it equal to its brilliancy. Many nations have adventured blood and treasure and endurance to acquire this coveted gem, and when almost within their grasp they have redded it afright from the last bold effort, and all their previous mightiness was wrecked in cowardice. The price of human liberty is *human blood!* Let the patriots of this clime rush fearlessly to the shambles, that their children may inherit almost fabulous prosperity."

"Inscrutable being!" said Percy.

"Yes," interposed the specter, "I am inscrutable to myself and

"well may I be inexplicable to others." He spoke this in a melancholy tone; and immediately resuming his former energy, he continued:

"Fear, I am supreme wherever I go. In the forest, I command; and, in the cities, I give law. The knowledge of moldering ages is impressed upon my brow, and man yields to it in homage, and the world in fear. Still, my mission is ended. Prove yourself worthy of your name, and success shall never be asked by you in vain."

At this moment, Percy not only stumbled, but fell to the earth. He rose immediately, cast his eyes upon the place where the specter had stood; but it was gone! It had disappeared as silently as it had come. Percy did not count too a sense of such an unearthly associate. He could not, however, divest his mind of the feeling of awe with which the specter had encumbered it. In vain he urged upon his conviction that the solemn roar, the intense obscurity of the night, the lonely and abounding neighborhood, and the stealthy appearance of the visitant, contracted much to the general effect upon his exultancies. There was nothing unreal in that ghostly face, and it was so palpably visible to his eye that he could not obliterate a lineament of its unsightliness. He began to fear, too, that he had been enticed within the circle of some enchantment—that it was not a tree which had caused his fall, but the very brick of some lurking demon, and that even the fluttering leaves upon the trees began to form direful and sportive faces, and scoff at his predicament. Despite these horrible fascinations, he staggered to his horse, clambered to his seat, and giving the steel the rein, was soon borne in safety to the city. There he was roused from his thoughtfulness. It was still in uproar, still in fear, still in apprehension; but, that most poignant of all cries, which had given a thrill of agony to his heart as he dashed through the streets when he quitted the city, was now hushed—the lamentations of the women and children had subsided, and when he inquired the cause of this gratifying abatement in the confusion, he heard, with pride, that it was accomplished by the unassisted efforts of his beloved Stella.

Percy reached his quarters fatigued in mind and body, but quite incompetent to repose. Well that he did not covet slumber, for he was ordered instantly to Brooklyn, whither his regiment had gone in his absence, and where it was thought there would be immediate fighting. Small streams of light—mere pencilings—were now radiating through the darkness of the east. It was too early for Percy to visit Stella, so he passed the house, pronounced a blessing on its roof and the fair one it sheltered, crossed the ferry, and joined his regiment. As he passed over, his thoughts recurred to the prediction of the specter, that there would be no battle on that day; but, when he landed, a hundred rumors met his ear, some of which multiplied the force, others its contiguity to Brooklyn, and others its terrible array; but, he soon ascertained that the morning scouts had not come in; hence, it was certain, the British had not advanced beyond the village of Flatbush.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND.

BESTEN ISLAND had pourel out her legions, various in nation and in language, but formidable in numbers and appointments. The hasty Scot, the ponderous German, the gay and fitful Hibernian, had united with the Saxon in this crusade against the rights of man to self-government. This army, rather mosaic in its construction, was commanded by General Howe, and was conveyed in a fleet of boats from the island of its rendezvous to Gravesend Bay, whence it advanced to Flatbush. There it had paused, and still rested on the arrival of Percy Archer in Brooklyn, having driven the American advance-guard toward the woods.

General Washington was in considerable consternation. General Green, to whose able management had been intrusted the defense of the island, was seized with fever, and was not only unable to keep the field, but his mind was not sufficiently composed to allow him to communicate his plans to others. In this position of affairs General Putman was appointed to the command. After the hasty inspection of a few hours, he prepared to receive the British. Percy was ordered forward with his regiment, and so also had been Rufus; but they occupied different ground. Night ensued without the advance of the enemy, and now came the necessity of double vigilance. Those who did not watch slept on their arms.

The British, however, were only affectely inert. They were resolving the plan of battle in their tents, and but wanted the concealment of night to put it in operation. When darkness veiled their schemes, two detachments proceeded from the main body—one toward the Narrows, the other toward Bedford and Jamaica. The former was to skirt the bay and advance toward Brooklyn; the latter was to cross the Bedford Hills, and, turning the American left, attack them in the rear, while those remaining at Flatbush, consisting mainly of Germans, were to advance from the camp; but both were cautioned not to make any great demonstration until the guns of the British were heard in the rear of the Americans. The detachment intended for Bedford Hills was accompanied by General Howe in person, and was commanded by Sir Henry Clinton and Lord Cornwallis. It was guided by a knavish Tory so unerringly that, before morning dawned, it had seized the Jamaica road and was marching in safety through

the pass, where they had ascertained, from a patrolman captured, that the American rear was unguarded. Then, while the Germans were slightly engaging the Americans at the center pass, and Colonel Grant was fighting in a similar cautious manner on the road skirting the coast, the guns of General Howe suddenly boomed upon the air. To the Americans it was an almost fatal sound, for they were taken in the rear; while, to the other British forces, it was the signal to advance with vigor. Their stratagem had succeeded.

Percy's regiment was opposed to the forces commanded by Colonel Grant, who, when he heard the fiery signal of his coadjutor's cannon, rebuked his efforts to a lassance. The conflict was terrible. The British at this point were two to one; but the Americans yielded their ground by steps, and that only in death, until the carnage in so limited a field was horrible.

But, at every point, American blood was flowing. Rufus was opposed to the center battalion of the enemy. When he saw the desperate position of his men—dropping momentarily between the merciless firing of the enemy in front and rear, few officers escaping, and even his General (Sullivan) taken prisoner—he gathered a few of his own company, exhorted them to follow him, and, with this little desperate band, plunged upon the enemy in his rear. They passed through a fearful ordeal, lost nearly three-fourths of their number, and the bleeding remnant reached the redoubt to bear intelligence of the horrors from which they had escaped.

General Washington, from a commanding eminence, saw the unequal fight so valiantly maintained by the forces with which Percy fought; he saw the gradual extermination of his bold soldiers, but he could afford them no relief—no succor. But, while he beheld with agony inconceivable what seemed to portend the tragic doom of every man, a yet more fearful danger was approaching, visible to him though concealed from the struggling patriots. Lord Cornwallis, screened by the projection of the wood, was advancing to reinforce the overwhelming British grenadiers. The mighty Washington dared scarcely contemplate the consequence of this assault from their unseen enemy, and each step that the swift Cornwallis took was a dagger to his agitated breast, for the Americans were still unconscious of the armed hundreds which a few minutes would disclose.

At this crisis of the engagement a lady, mounted upon a spirited horse, was seen to dash from the wood and ride toward the combatants. The animal she rode was regardless of the nature of the route he had to pass. The course was broken and irregular to an extreme degree, and intersected by deep ravines and steep ascents; but the gallant steed was equal to every impediment. He dexterously slid down the hollows, scrambled up the precipitous hills, leaped the masses of stone that enumbered the plain, avoided contact with the numerous fallen trees, and, had it not been for the fatal strife he would have been adored as a marvel of his kind. The rider, too,

as steady in the saddle as the courser in the race. She sat as

if a portion of the animal, and crossed that field of blood, amid the wounded, the dying and the dead, only intent upon the rescue of the living. For a moment the slaughter ceased. Neither side would jeopardize this fair and intrepid courier, and, by a tacit gallantry, not a gun was fired. The lady, with uniminished speed, rode toward Lord Sterling, who commanded this division of the American forces. Beside him stood Percy Archer. The lady was seen to stagger as she with difficulty recognized him, so fierce and so disfigured he appeared in the black and bloody harness of the day. But she smothered all other thoughts in that of her mission.

"From the cover of yonder wood the enemy is advancing with double the numbers to which you are now so fatally opposed. Let me implore you to retreat. Our country can not afford to lose such valiant men. There is yet a narrow path to safety."

At this moment a few of Cornwallis' men debouched from the wood. The British perceived them, received them with a cheer, and renewed the battle with redoubled ardor.

Percy, leaning upon his sword as if to recruit himself from exhaustion, was astounded at the sweet voice which now sounded up on his ear, and he could only articulate:

"Stella!"

It was indeed that noble girl who had defied all the perils and the horrors of battle to save Percy and his valiant coadjutors. Lord Sterling saw how hopeless was victory now that the British were powerfully reinforced, and how desperate was the defense. He therefore exclaimed:

"Major Archer, we must attempt to save a few of our brave fellows. Let us fall back upon Gowanus Bay." Then addressing Stella, he continued, taking her hand: "Fair lady, a soldier has but few words at such a time as this; but, with such sons and daughters, the freedom of America is assured, notwithstanding the calamities of this day."

The Americans were now in retreat. Stella saw the expression of deep anxiety in Percy's countenance; but she would not hear him speak, and said, rapidly:

"Percy, I know this locality well. I will be your guide to safety if it be possible to escape this terrible slaughter."

Stella then dashed forward toward the place indicated, that she might be a star of hope to the wounded soldiery. She soon stood upon the banks of the creek fed by the tidal water from Gowanus Bay, and which supplied the mills erected beyond. She saw that the tide was flowing, and that the utmost energy was needed. The men were retreating to where she stood, but were yielding to the enemy stubbornly, as if they were not willingly seeking safety with so many of their comrades unrevengeful upon the fatal field. Stella watched the falling met and the rising waters with equal alarm. At length the Americans reached the bank, but they were followed at their very heels by the remorseless enemy.

"Order your men into the creek, Percy!" exclaimed the indomitable Stella. "It is the Red Sea to us. The tide is not yet deep enough to drown, and, though we may be succored, those of the enemy who attempt to follow will perish."

"For God's sake, hasten over, dear Stella!" exclaimed Percy, in agitation. "I and my brave fellows will cross instantly."

"I go, Percy," replied Stella—but lose not a moment. There is life in promptness—death in delay!"

Thus saying, she plunged into the advancing waters, which were not so deep but that her horse maintained his feet.

Even a heavy splashing was heard, and the crimson fluid that dyed the flowing tide showed that the bleeding soldiers had entered the waters; then followed another plunge, that of the victors whose craving for blood was unsated. But the creek was deep and threatening, and soon, from the middle of the stream, where the flood was treacherous and the current strong, cries were heard for help, and frantic men were seen struggling for existence with only their hands thrust above the waters. One moment of struggle, and then the hellish stream, terrible in its power and calmness, bore down its gasping victims unto death. Those who had passed the center, awed by the fate of their companions, dared not to return, and about thirty of these victorious British yielded themselves prisoners to the defeated Americans—casting one gleam of satisfaction upon this calamitous day.

The rescued soldiers, now safe from molestation, proceeded slowly toward the redoubt. Some hobble on, supported by their muskets; some were aided by their comrades; some, whose last effort had been to cross the water, were carried. The more able were assisting the disabled—a few only had escaped unscathed.

Percy walked beside Stella. His admiration of her conduct was boundless. She had faced the horrors of that day, appalling even to man, with a courage that he could not have conceived at the command of woman. Her object had been the preservation of himself and the few noble fellows who comported with him. He saw the grateful expressions of the eyes as they toiled toward the redoubt, and he knew they wished him to interpret this language to her ear. But he never had fewer words at his disposal—never before had found it so difficult to address Stella; he could only muse and admire in silence.

"I fear, Stella, that the terrors of to-day will long retain their bitterness in your heart," he at length found words to relieve the silence.

"They are, indeed, Percy," said Stella, "deep in my heart and thrilling to my soul; but it is my duty rather to accustom myself to distress than to avoid it, and I will make the effort."

"Never, I trust, to appear on such a field," remarked Percy. "This is only an installment of the dread penalty that we have to pay for liberty; but let it be contributed by man, and not by woman.

We have resolved upon the purchase, though not without a due estimate of cost, and we are not likely to recede from the responsibilities. But, may I ask, Stella, by what species of magic you occupied the wood from which you emerged so fearlessly?"

"By a most mysterious invitation," replied Stella. "This morning, at an early hour, a note was delivered to me, stating that, if I desired to secure the safety of you and my brother, I must instantly prepare to follow you to the field; and that a boat was then engaged to convey me, my horse, and my servant, if I pleased, where I should be useful. I hesitated long; but my fears for you and Rufus triumphed. Accompanied by Caesar, and mounted on Barb, I repaired to the rendezvous. The boatman was there, though unlike a boatman in every thing but dress. He assisted us on board, and immediately pushed off. As the tide was running out of the harbor, we passed easily along. On our passage, the man explained that he thought both you and Rufus would be opposed to Colonel Grant's force, who would advance by the river; that he should land me in his rear so that I could ride through an adjoining wood, and, approaching your division without danger, might warn you to retreat to Gowanus Bay, as much larger forces would join Grant and overmatch you. I landed—entered the wood—commenced my journey, and, following a path, soon heard a heavy tramp and many voices. I hoped it was you; but learned from their conversation they were the troops marching to your destruction. With the utmost speed I hastened toward you, and so great was my anxiety that I was in the midst of the firing before I was aware of the danger."

As Percy listened to this singular narrative, his thoughts recurred to the specter of the previous night. He felt that there was association in the mystery, if not in the persons, of the boatman and that fearful visitant. Further conversation was however, prevented by their arrival at the redoubt, where they were received with enthusiasm. The combat had been viewed from many points, and the desperate nature of the struggle was fully estimated; hence, the miraculous escape of these patriots was welcomed by cheers and tears and silent graspings of the hand.

The gallant Barb, too, received every species of caress. Some fondly patted his sleek coat; some embraced him; some examined his teeth to ascertain his age; some drew memorial hairs from his flowing mane and tail. Some claimed him as a native of Connecticut; others knew him to belong to Massachusetts, while those who lived beyond the boundaries of Pennsylvania, maintained that he had all the fire and rashness of the South.

Rufus, his arm suspended in a sling, and with evidences of other repairs to his battered person, soon was by his sister's side. Both exhibited considerable emotion, for both had passed through great perils.

"I will not—I can not—nay, I dare not blame you, dearest Stella," exclaimed Rufus. "for the fearful part you have sustained in

this terrible drama. I shou'd but incur the hatred of the camp, so popular are you with officers and soldiers. So providential has been your guidance and protection that I will not sul'y the achievement with the reproach of imprudence."

Before Stella could reply, Percy had grasped the hand of her brother. The pressure was returned by Rufus. Their hearts were full, and each neither spoke, both looked toward Stella, and then withdrew with her to seek such shelter as the frightened inhabitants might afford.

The battle was fought. It was heroically disputed; but through strategy, the lamentable illness of General Greene, and the superior numbers of the foe, victory remained with the invaders. It was apprehended that, in the mirthness of their triumph, they would assault the intrenchments. A redoubt had been thrown up inclosing the village of Brooklyn, extending from the Wallabout to Gowanus Bay. This could not now be efficiently defended. The chief force consisted of the militia, and of men who had been, a few days earlier, marched from the plow with no other weapons than the implements of the husbandman rudely fashioned by the smith to something more martial. These men had never seen more than a few days' service. Without training, thus primitively armed, they were not equal to meet such an army as now threatened them. But the British had experienced the dauntless courage of the Americans, and, fortunately, resolved to defer the attack upon the redoubt until the following morning, that they might, by refreshment and repose, be the better prepared for the formidable resistance they expected to encounter.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETREAT.

TOWARD evening, both Percy and Rufus rejoined Stella. They communicated to her the intelligence that Brooklyn would be evacuated by the enemy that night—that every boat was to be pressed into the service—that the greatest secrecy was imperative. Both regretted that they could not personally conduct Stella to the ferry: but the duties of each were such that must be personally discharged to insure security and success.

" You need fear nothing, Stella," said Rufus; " the whole army is your guard. So deeply have you penetrated to the heart of every soldier that he humbly casts his services at your feet."

" You are facetious in your flattery, Rufus," replied Stella. " I have no apprehension at being thus abandoned by you and Percy.

The same of your names will be to me a passport among the soldiery, at what hour does the embarkation commence?"

"At nine," said Percy—"a secret known to but few."

The visitors did not remain long with Stella. On leaving, however, they advised her to be early at the ferry-boats, although at any hour which might suit her pleasure, she would receive every protection.

The house at which Stella had procured entertainment was that of Mrs. Rapaelye, the descendant of an old family on the island. This lady, although hospitable and kind, was indignant at the conduct of the revolutionary party toward her husband, whom they had banished to some distance for suspected complicity with the English. She resolved to resent this punishment, and an opportunity now offered which nearly satisfied her malice. She had assigned to Stella an apartment having all the appearance of privacy; but she concealed herself in a closet whence she had the means of hearing all that transpired. She thus arrived at the knowledge of the intended secret abandonment of Brooklyn by the army.

This vengeful woman—thus armed with mischief—retired to her room and revolved in her evil mind the most calamitous use to make of this intelligence. When her plans were sufficiently matured, she listened to her kitchen where sat Jaco, her negro slave. To this poor fellow she revealed the intention of the Americans, and her determination to communicate this to the enemy. She prevailed upon the unwilling Jaco to be the bearer, on the representation that he would be rewarded.

At nine o'clock the embarkation of the troops commenced. The boats were numerous; but the number to be conveyed across the river in the few hours of darkness, amounted to ten thousand. Some of the boats were propelled by oars and others by sail. During the early night the latter made slow progress; but a breeze sprung up, which gave hope to the failing hearts of the patriots, for it filled the white sails of the larger craft, and the transport was conducted with rapidity.

At a late hour, Stella quitted the residence of her hostess, who, with hurried words bade farewell to her guest. Mounted on Barb, she repaired to the boats; but there was so much confusion, that she immediately retraced her steps to await a later period, and not daring to disturb the quiet residence of Mrs. Rapaelye, she rode, almost unconsciously, toward the redoubts.

In the mean time, the faithful agent of his owner's treachery, Jaco, had passed the redoubts, and, with diligence insisted on by his mistress, was proceeding toward the British camp when he was hailed by the Hessian sentinel. Many questions and rejoinders ensued between the German and the slave; but they were mutually unintelligible, till Jaco was conducted to the guard-house, where the officer of the watch, no better versed in the English tongue than his follower, especially as spoken by the unlettered Jaco, committed the delinquent

to confinement, where, with that great secret locked within his breast, pined the unhappy negro until caught before the English in the morning.

No sooner had Stella quitted the residence of Mrs. Rapaelye, than she put on her bonnet, left the house, and walked to the place of embarkation. She had heard the truth—the Acericans were retreating. Impatient for vengeance, as she saw the opportunity preceding, she directed her steps toward the redoubts, to welcome the invader. Reaching the earth-works, all was found in repose. Even the jealous sentinels had abandoned the lonely spot. The stronghold—so cunningly contrived—was unwatched and undefended. It was just midnight. So solemn was the hour and the place that she was almost awed at her own treason. But the demon of revenge goaded her on. She mounted the redoubt, looked upon the intrenchment—still, all was in silence. She had confidence in the integrity of Jaco—nor could she doubt the willingness of the foe to slay his enemy. Then why this maddening calm? Vengeance *should* be achieved! the injuries should be avenged in blood that night! She would summon the foe. She would cross the works and enter the enemy's camp and arouse the slumbering lion to the combat.

Stella, also, was astonished to find the fortifications totally abandoned at an hour so early as midnight, and the whole line of works open to the enemy, had he been sufficiently vigilant to avail himself of the error. She was about to withdraw from this forsaken spot, when she perceived a figure on the edge of the redoubt. It was that of a female, standing near a gun, and was, apparently, about to descend upon the enemy's side, when a tall, ghostly figure arose from beneath the carriage. Applying a match, the gun exploded with a terrible report, repeated many times as its dying echoes reverberated from the distant hills. A fatal shriek followed the report. The female figure fell—then rose again—then, gathering all her strength, she rushed down the redoubts. When the affrighted woman passed Stella, she recognized the terrified features of her hostess.

These succeeding visions shook the nerves of Stella, which had been severely disciplined in the course of the day, and her asthmatic heart was especially excited as to the shadowy figure that fired the gun, for she saw not whence it came nor whither it vanished. It seemed to expire with the explosion.

As soon, however, as she recovered her firmness, she resolved at once to return to the water's edge, and to apply to be passed over the river to New York. But the terrors of the night had not closed, for, as she slowly rode along the solitary path, greatly abstracted by the circumstances of the day, three fellows advanced, two seized her horse, and the third demanded what valuables she had. Unprepared for such ruffianism in a camp of patriots, an involuntary scream escaped her, and she exclaimed:

"I am the sister of a soldier in this day's battle. Is it thus you reward the blood that he has shed?"

"Come, come, 'ung mi-sus,'" said the ruffian, "no preachen. Them as like sogering can bleed; but our method of bleeden ain't half so bloody;" and the fellow seemed to chuckle at his conceit.

"I have no money nor valuables with me," said Stella, greatly alarmed, "but the simple rings upon my fingers."

"Ox wal'ean," said one of the other ruffians, in a brutal voice, and Stella was about to obey this frightful order, when a deep, sepulchral voice exclaimed :

"Scoundrels, have you the temerity to rob within pistol shot of two armies?"

The voice seemed to proceed from beneath the earth, and was so hollow, that even the hardy thieves who threatened Stella, were half inclined to relinquish so poor a victim; but, while they paused, the same voice cried :

"Leave that lady untouched, unhurted! Away with you, dogs, villains!"

The men still retained their places—two at the horse's head and one beside Stella, who had not removed her rings. A moment passed, then a rushing, apparently of the air, and one of the villains fell. Stella, for an instant, closed her eyes, and when she re-opened them the robbers were gone. The one who had been felled was still upon the earth; but the others could neither be seen in retreat nor in the road. Stella looked around. All was silent as the tomb. No soldier was seen—no other words were uttered—she seemed to owe her safety to that awful rushing in the air. She quitted the spot more terrified than she had been during the day, for nothing had been so indefinable.

Stella was recalled from her painful reverie by the heavy tramp of men. Unmindful of whether it was the advance of friend or foe, she sought human association, and dashed toward it. It was Mifflin's corps returning to the redoubts, which it had improperly quitted before the hour assigned. At her request a party of these soldiers sought the dead man; but there was no body to be found nor any appearance of violence. This increased the agitation of Stella, who, depressed and sorrowful, reached the ferry and was conveyed to New York.

When Jaco, the slave, was, early next morning, transferred from German to English custody, his errand was understood, and a few of the English approached the trenches, entered them, and found them untenanted. A detachment fastened to the water's edge in the hope that they might intercept some of these runaways; but the retreat—a victory in itself—had been accomplished, and over nine thousand men, with all their munitions of war, had been conveyed across the river in one night by such boats as could be picked up at three or four hours' notice. When the British reached the shore, there was only one boat within musket-shot. It was ordered back, and was found to contain the three ruffians who had insulted Stella,

and who had remained behind for plunder. They fell a sacrifice to their own cupidity.

The midnight gun was heard by both armies. The report occasioned alarm and confusion among the Americans, who were apprehensive that their redoubts were attacked at a moment when there was not a man to defend them, and not half the troops had passed the river. The British, too, arose to suspicion at this fiery signal, became more vigilant, doubled their sentinels, and prepared for some hostile movement of the enemy; but, as nothing further ensued, it was ascribed by them to accident, though to the Americans the explosion was ever a subject of fearful reference.

Stella repaired directly to her horse. The watchful Chloe rushed to the door. Tears of joy were in the poor slave's eyes; she could not speak for sobbing. Cæsar, little less affected, dashed grotesquely round the head and heels of Barb, and when Stella descended, he clasped his arms round the animal's neck. The horse seemed not less delighted than the negro, and together they proceeded to the stable.

"Oh, Miss Stel," exclaimed Chloe, as they entered the house, "what am dis ho' ty dat kill de white man, make him wife widow, and his poor chil' er in it wid grief? Why white man fight white man for lib' ty, ha, Miss Stel? Do Britishers want sell white 'Merica man as dey do nigger?"

"No," said Stella, smiling, despite her fatigue and agony, at the unique idea of Chloe. "The British are not quite so unjust as that; but, it is political and not personal liberty for which America is now contending, and which these people deny us."

"P'litical lib' ty," repeated Chloe, "what's dat, I wonder?" but, perceiving the distress of her dear mistress, curiosity yielded to anxiety, and she hastened away to prepare those creature comforts which she saw were needed.

Alone, secure, and at home, Stella cast herself into a chair. Enfeebled from the exertions of the twenty four hours passed, she lightened the sorrow and agitation of her heart by a copious flow of tears. So great was her prostration that she soon sunk into repose.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VICTORS OF THE PLAIN DEFEATED IN THE PARLOR.

The completeness of this retreat was regarded by the British as an instance of great military vigor and resource in emergency. They could scarcely credit that such an army had been transported across

the river in the limit of one short night. The treason of Jaco had yielded them but three prisoners, and these were thieves whose necks deserved the halter. The retirement was so masterly, orderly, and judicious—the day had been so well contested, that the British Generals had a clear perception of the strength of their foe and of the remarkable genius of their commander.

The English were now masters of Long Island. The Americans held Manhattan Island. As the morning dawned, the belligerents gazed upon each other in grim defiance from the opposite shores.

New York was alive with lamentation, with military ardor and with social fright. Women bewailed husbands who had fallen, children their lost fathers. Others, apprehending danger, implored to be assigned some place of protection. Amid all, encouraging, commanding, sympathizing, moved the calm Washington, equal to all the circumstances of the eventful hour.

None knew how soon the city might be attacked, nor where. The enemy with his vessels swept the sea; the East River and the Hudson were open to his ships; and either side of the island might be assaulted. Redoubts were thrown up along the coast; batteries were erected; the streets were defended by barricades; and every available house was occupied by soldiers to guard all avenues of approach.

Stella was not idle amid the clash of arms. She consoled with the afflicted widow and orphan; expostulated with the frenzied wives and daughters who rushed from street to street, teaching them that there was neither safety in flight nor danger in remaining. She pointed to the hospitals, whither she entreated them to repair, and lent their ministrations to soothe the sufferings of the wounded soldiers. By these efforts she recalled to reason and usefulness hundreds of those who were distracting the troubled city.

A council of Generals was now held. It was declared that the city could not be defended from the army and navy of the foe. It was therefore suggested by some of the determined spirits that it should be abandoned and destroyed by fire, by this sacrifice depriving the British of such geoddy quarters for the winter. But this was forbidden by Congress. In view, however, of the imminence of the danger, the headquarters of the army were removed to Westchester, beyond the island, by way of King's Bridge, and General Putnam was left in command of the city, with his brigade.

By this arrangement both Percy and Rufus were removed to a greater distance from Stella, although their military duties since the retreat had become so severe that she had seen but little of them; but she rode daily to their quarters, which contributed to her health, and afforded her occupation. She each day returned with reassurances of the safety of those she loved, and of the inaction of the British.

On one of these visits she perceived an unusual commotion. There was, at a distance, and on the margin of the river, an agitation she had never before observed. One or two English vessels

were in the East River; but they had reposed there several days, and had sought the shelter of the interposing islands on being annoyed from the coast. They still were unmoved.

Galloping to an eminence, she saw the threatened invasion had commenced. The boats of the English were upon the waters and landing soldiers; but, what caused her a yet greater pang, was that the American force stationed to guard this point was flying in cowardice. There was no report of fire-arms, no resistance—none of the heroic emulation which had been displayed so terribly on the former field. An indignant blush abdell to the loveliness of her face. She felt that were she near enough she would raise her hand to chastise those vagrant soldiers. At that moment she perceived a horseman approaching in headlong haste to the place of debarkation. He was followed by others at some little distance, the foremost of whom her quick eye distinguished to be Percy. The leading officer, however, was General Washington. He confronted the retreating men, reproached them with cowardice, rallied them, and led them toward the enemy, who was weak and cautious, and suspicious of an ambush. But the poor fellows, unused to war, and terrified at the ferocious appearance of the Germans, were uninspired by the example of the noble leader who encouraged them, and again turned their backs upon the foe without an effort at attack.

General Washington, rarely ruffled, now lost the command of his temper at such worthless conduct. Drawing a pistol from his hostler, he attempted to relieve the army of the dastards, but thrice it missed fire at such unworthy game, and the runaways escaped. The General, his vengeance unappeased, tore his hat from his head, and cast it on the ground exclaiming:

"Are these the men with whom I am to defend America?"

This occurred but twenty yards from the foe, and the General seemed inclined to spur forward and attack him single-handed; but Percy came up, seized the rein of his charger, checked his purpose, and led him from the field. America might never have been free but for that act.

"Ride to New York," exclaimed General Washington as he recovered his self-possession, "and direct General Putnam to evacuate the city in all haste. Tell him the British are already landed, and nothing will save him but a miracle."

Stella observed Percy quit the General's side, and ride furiously in the direction in which she was. She descended the hill to intercept him.

"Percy, good Percy," exclaimed Stella, "one word. Is all hope fled?"

"You here, dearest Stella?" exclaimed Percy in surprise, without lessening his speed. "Place Barb beside my horse; we must converse as we fly, for life is in my pace, and I dare not pause."

"Whither go you, Percy?" inquired Stella.

"To order Putnam to abandon the city," replied Percy.

"Are the British landed in sufficient force to endanger him?" asked Stella.

"The river is covered with their boats," replied Percy.

"I will remain here," said Stella, "and watch their evolutions I may possibly be useful."

"Let me implore you, Stella," said Percy, "not again to defy those British muskets, nor to encounter the ribald soldiery who bear them. There will be no fighting. They are now too strong to be resisted."

"I place your welfare upon my heart, dear Percy," said Stella, with a smile that enchanted him; "and they will shield me in prudence. Farewell!"

"Farewell, farewell!" and he kissed his adieu, as with the speed of lightning he pursued his course.

Stella returned to the eminence from which she had beheld the discomfiture of the General. She saw the increasing columns of the British rise above the hills which screened the margin of the waters. Turtle and Kipp's bays were gay with the scarlet uniforms of the soldiers, while their polished arms and bright equipments reflected a dazzling luster, which the eye could scarcely look upon. The day was overwhelmingly hot, and Stella found herself compelled to withdraw from the elevation; but not until she observed, with no inconsiderable alarm, that the enemy were advancing directly in a line calculated to intercept the retreat of the Americans. She therefore hastened to the residence of a friend—a Mrs. Murray, whose home was situated on the Bloomingdale road—informing her of the approach of the British forces, and these two ladies resolved if possible to detain them.

The hostile force marched directly toward the house, and precisely in a direction to intercept the retreat of General Putnam. The officers preceded the imposing cavalcade. As they approached, Mrs. Murray advanced to the gate of her residence, and they raised their plumed hats in deference.

"Gentlemen," said the lady, "the day is sultry, and you seem to suffer from it. May I offer you the hospitalities of my poor roof?"

The officers conferred for a moment, then courteously accepted the invitation, and entered the house. There they not only saw a cheerful repast, but were welcomed by the lovely Stella. It was evident that she attracted the marked admiration of the visitors, not only by her beauty, but by her manners and conversation.

"This is the first mark of hospitality," said General Howe, "that we have received since our arrival in this country. I trust that it is not designed thus to disarm us, as was the generous liberality extended to illustrious Romans by the Egyptian Cleopatra."

The humorous remark of the gallant soldier was so coincident with the intentions of the fair conspirators, that Stella could not repress a blush of guiltiness.

"I will guarantee," said Sir Henry Clinton, "that there is no treason in this rosy wine, visible or invisible."

"Nothing," said Lord Cornwallis, "is so apt to beguile Sir Henry Clinton from the path of duty as the juice of a favorite vintage."

"Were it not for courtesy to these ladies," replied Sir Henry Clinton, "I would rise and challenge you to the march at once."

"You will scarcely allow me to believe," said Mrs Murray, fearful that this banqueting might result in sudden departure, "that my wines and confections are palatable, unless you confer upon them more attention."

"We must not permit you, madam," said General Howe, "in your hospitality, to doubt the quality of our gratitude;" and he refilled his glass.

Then Lord Cornwallis, addressing his conversation to Stella, remarked, playfully:

"I rejoice that our invasion of this morning has occasioned you no discomposure; though it was the cause of great terror to those who were appointed to receive us with military honors."

"Does your lordship complain of the neglect?" said Stella with a smile.

"It was not precisely soldierly," replied Cornwallis, gayly, "nor was their rustic dress, nor their ungainly arms; indeed, they seemed better prepared for tillage than for war, and have probably fled to their native fields for occupation, for they moved off with great rapidity."

"Your lordship must not judge our forces by their uniforms," said Stella, "for you will find as doughty men in homespun as ever faced cannon in the royal scarlet."

"I fear I have touched a chord of nationality," continued Cornwallis, "and have provoked a foe where I am anxious to conciliate a friend."

"But, as that foe is unarmed," said Stella, "she is as harmless as those poor recruits whom you so merrily deride."

"Ah, fair lady," exclaimed Cornwallis, placing his hand upon his heart, "it is not the missiles of war that wound the soldier most deeply. There are shafts which enter the heart, and which defy all the skill of pharmacy."

"But, the polished, graceful, and warlike Generals of his Britannic Majesty's forces, who believe themselves impervious to the sons of the colony, are no doubt clad in an armor impenetrable to the attacks of its daughters."

"If the resistance of its sons," replied Cornwallis, bowing lowly to Stella, "be as formidable as what I perceive of the beauty of its daughters, we shall be a defeated army, and our monarch will yet lament having exposed his devoted soldiers in a cause so hopeless."

"Its sons are inflexible," said Stella, solemnly, and wholly disregarding the compliment to herself, "they will live in freedom or die

"In blood!" The hot blood mounted to her face, and her heart beat with her rising patriotism.

Cornwallis was struck with the extreme loveliness of the young woman, as she pronounced these words. They emanated from her heart and went keenly to his; and in after days, when the brilliancy of his exploits were darkened by the shadows cast upon them by the genius of the enduring Washington and the faith and bravery of his suffering followers, the thoughts of Cornwallis recurred to the prophetic words uttered while he was being decoyed from his vigilance on his progress from Turtle Bay. A pause in the conversation now ensued, which was occasioned by the seeming meditation of Cornwallis, but it did not continue long. His lordship returned to the encounter.

"I feel that I am speaking to a belligerent," he said, "but, may I ask if the city be completely evacuated by the Americans?"

"I think General Putnam quitted it this morning," replied Stella.

"Indeed!" said Cornwallis; "would not even that singular and chivalric commander remain to welcome us with his guns?"

"Had you been earlier or more diligent," said Stella, "I think he would have afforded you that honor; but he, no doubt, was desirous to avoid a toilsome march beneath the midday's sun. He will be glad, sir, to welcome you at another time, in the Westchester hills."

"Had we been earlier, as you remark," said Cornwallis, "we might have encountered his scampering battalions, and have released him of their command; but, had we intercepted him I should have been deprived the privilege and happiness I now enjoy. I do confess that even if that veritable old Israel Putnam were to escape with his whole herd of defenders, with all his armaments, including those grotesque scythes and pitchforks, while I hold this colloquy with you I shall consider the delight right cheaply purchased."

"Your gallantry, I perceive, never fails you; nor your courage, in the presence of ladies!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" chimed in Sir Henry Clinton. "Fairly hit! If the Yankee balls are as true as the tongues of the Yankee women, I plainly perceive we shall suffer somewhat in our service."

"You will find Yankee hearts and Yankee hands as true as steel to their cause; if any Tories give you welcome, they will be found to be Englishmen who love oppression better than liberty," said Stella, with great deliberation.

"No more, my dear lady," said Lord Howe; "you will vanquish us before we can meet your brave men on their ground."

With conversation like this, sometimes personal, sometimes general, but always courteous and agreeable, did these rather vainglorious leaders of a powerful host enliven the halls of Murray Hill, sip their cool wines, and enjoy the refreshing shade—little suspecting that they were prisoners as well as guests, because the fetters by which

they were bound were hidden from their eyes—while General Putnam, assisted by the agile Percy, their horses white with foam, hastened the march of the troops toward the main army, only a wood screening the retreating columns from the loitering foe.

At length the English army resumed its triumphal progress, headed by its gay and witty chieftains, who, with rubicund cheeks and merry hearts rallied Cornwallis upon the necessity, as a faithful soldier of the crown, of eschewing the society of the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the rebels. Soon they discovered, to their chagrin, that they had been outwitted by their fair enemy. Putnam's division had escaped, and its immunity had been purchased upon those very terms which Lord Cornwallis, in his adulation, had assured Stella would be so acceptable! He was taken at his word and could not, in honor, resent it.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN INAUSPICIOUS FRIEND.

COUNTERARY to expectation, the British had posted sentinels across the island, forming a *cordon* from the East River to the Hudson, at a point which embraced Murray Hill, so that Stella found herself within the enemy's pickets, and forbidden any communication with her brother or Percy. New York was now in possession of the British, and although they had silenced all alarm of the inhabitants by assurances of protection provided they behaved as good and loyal subjects, she knew with what jealousy and suspicion even a lady would be regarded whose brother and other friends were in the rebel army. She, too, had been rendered conspicuous by recent events, and because of these, might be thought capable of conduct disdainful to her feelings. There was no alternative, however, but to return to New York, where possibly, she thought, Rufus might contrive to correspond with her, and advise her what next to do. She therefore bade farewell to Mrs. Murray, mounted her little Barb, and entered the captured city. Its streets were filled with soldiers, and the air with the martial uproar of fife and drums. Few civilian were to be seen, and those passed the conquerors with a timidity which betokened a tacit acknowledgement of their conquered state. The military gazed rudely upon her, and the streets were so filled with idle loungers, that she was compelled to advance very slowly, and listen to the oaths and ribald language uttered by these braggarts. Although her heart beat rapidly, and she was apprehensive of personal violence, the fellows did not venture so far, and she reached

her residence in safety. The frightened Chloe, and scarcely more valorous Caesar, received her with a peal of ejaculations expressive of their deep and inconsolable grief, which the presence of Stella by no means contributed to allay. Tears descended copiously from their eyes, as they wrung their hands and moved about in agony. Stella was not unused to their noisy sorrow; but, as it generally subsided on the appearance of herself or Rufus, she was the more astounded that it should continue. It now seemed to act inversely—to open fresh fountains in their eyes, increase their clamor, and impart new vigor to the distortion of their limbs. The truth was that this untutored couple, driven almost to distraction by the rapid departure of the American troops and the entrance of the English, had allowed themselves to be persuaded that the refractory whites were now British slaves, and that Stella was reduced to servitude, and, consequently, was their equal in every thing but color!

"On'y tink, Miss Stel—for I'll alus call ye so—on'y tink o' dat calamity."

"What can have occurred to excite all this lamentation?" said Stella; "pray be more explicit and relieve my alarm?"

"Oh, Miss," said the sobbing Chloe, "dem great people come—dem ter'ble fighters—dem grand nation King Georges."

"The English, Chloe, you mean," said Stella. "They are not all kings that wear scarlet coats. But what have they done to produce all this terror?"

"Don't you know, Miss Stel?" exclaimed Chloe, with redoubled howling, so that Stella could with difficulty comprehend her. "Oh, oh, oh, you slave now—you nigger now without de black."

"Pray, Chloe, be less noisy," said Stella, almost in anger. "What absurdity has crept into your foolish heads?"

"Dem ter'ble men make all slaves now," said Chloe.

"Who told you such folly?" asked Stella.

"Nigger gal next door," replied Chloe. "Her missus no slave—her missus Tory. Why not Miss Stel and Massa Ruf Tory? Den dey no slave!"

Stella perceived the danger of permitting conversation between such inveterate gossips, the chief subject of which was what transpired in the household; but highly colored, to suit their exaggerated ideas of grandeur or depression. She therefore cautioned both Chloe and Caesar from maintaining intimacy with any one, as their communications might prove detrimental both to herself and Rufus; for, as the English were supreme in the city, the slightest evidence would be very nicely weighed against those whom it affected.

"Ain't you slave, Miss Stel?" asked the still incredulous Chloe.

"Certainly not," replied Stella. "It is not the object of the English to establish that description of vassalage among Americans."

"Oh, I am very glad, Miss Stel," said the rejoicing Chloe. "I ebber talk wil dat gal Sal agin—nebber!"

A few days passed. The anxiety of Stella in reference to her broth-

er and Percy increased. She had hoped they would have devised some means of sending to her, though she had little doubt the difficulties of communication were as insurmountable with them as with herself. She had not ventured to quit the house since the day of her arrival—the menacing impertinence of the soldiery had so alarmed her—although, so far as she could discover, there was more propriety of conduct practiced toward the civilians, than on the proud day of their occupation.

Stella was sitting one evening alone, revolving in her mind how it might be possible to intimate to Rufus her desire to quit New York, now rendered so unpleasant, when Chloe entered the room in a state of considerable excitement, to announce that a gentleman wished to speak with her.

"Who is it Chloe?" asked Stella, observing her agitation.

"One dear great lord's liege," replied Chloe, advancing toward her mistress, and delivering her reply in a whisper.

"An Englishman, and one of the military? Impossible," observed Stella. Her fears made her apprehend some evil at this call, but she was determined not to betray any feeling of alarm in the presence of her terrified slave. With faltering step, but assumed composure of countenance, she entered the reception-room. The shadows of evening had just begun to produce a slight obscurity in the apartment. Upon her entrance, a tall military man rose from a chair on which he was seated. He wore a sword by his side, but the indistinctness of the light concealed the lineaments of his face, which were also shielded by a liberal moustache and somewhat bushy whiskers. He advanced toward Stella, bowed with studied politeness, and then said :

"I fear, Miss Westville, that I am forgotten, although I hope to be permitted to renew an acquaintance which was formed in another country."

Stella was astonished to be thus addressed. Surveying the visitor more closely, she replied :

"Is it not Captain Malman?"

"The Captain of other days, Miss Westville," said the stranger "but Major Malman now."

Stella bowed, to signify that she stood corrected, and then asked .

"Are you still attached to the British army, Major Malman?

"I am," he replied, "and form one of the present expedition. I am rejoiced to find you an inhabitant of New York. Is your brother also here?"

"He is with the army," replied Stella.

"I regret to hear your confirmation of that report," said the Major, with the indifference of contempt, as Stella denominated the forces of General Washington an army.

"To me it is a solace to all my griefs," said Stella.

"That your brother is in rebellion?" exclaimed the Major.

"That he maintains the heritage to which he is born," rejoined

Stella. Even I, a woman, feel the sacred fire which warms man's heart to liberty, and arms him against oppression."

"I regret that you have been taught to garnish insurrectionary deeds with this vivacity," said the Major, "for it is such besotted conduct that has constrained His Majesty to employ his armies to restore the allegiance of his subjects."

"You have advanced in power and strength, and are for a moment, triumphant; but you may soon be reduced to feebleness," said Stella, seriously. "I know the indomitable nature of the sons of this soil. You can not conquer them. They are resolved on liberty, and they will never sheathe the sword which they have drawn until they have crowned it with victory."

The Major listened with evident impatience and disdain. As the evening was darkening, Stella summoned Chloe to bring candles, which she thought would afford an opportunity to terminate a discussion that was neither agreeable nor desirable. When Chloe had retired, however, the Major said :

"I will not renew the subject of our conversation, although I deeply lament that a mind so rich in many things should be so misguided on this absorbing question; but I will proceed to refer to another object in this visit—one imperative on my duty. On taking possession of the city, a number of worthy citizens, whose loyalty does them honor, and who are enthusiastic in our cause, were kind enough to afford us considerable information, by which it seems that you are not exempt from their suspicions."

"Of what am I reported to be guilty?" demanded Stella, indignant both at the charge and at the manner in which it had been withheld by the Major.

"Of correspondence with the rebels," replied the Major.

"The accusation is false," replied Stella, the color on her cheek heightened by the conviction of innocence. "I have not seen nor heard from my brother, nor any other of that patriot band, since the day of your entry here. Indeed, I have not quitted my home, for the insolence of your soldiery when I was last abroad, has since confined me closely to my residence."

"With me, Miss Westville, your denial has the force of truth," said the Major; "but there are those whose doubts it is almost impossible to quench, and they place you in rather a hazardous position in an enemy's camp. You need protection. There was a time," continued the insidious Major, "when happiness and security surrounded you—when I, unable to resist your beauty and your attractions, asked to share in the sweet sympathy of your heart. The privilege was denied me. I retired forlorn and wretched; but neither time, my active life, nor the excitement of the battle-field could drive from my memory that one cherished hope, or from my heart that deep affection. To-day I meet you in another land—the soil of your birth—among a people whose defection from a powerful country is about to be punished in blood. Abandoned to the evils of war

in the camp of the avenger, and exposed to imminent peril, I now find you. Miss Westville—Stella—still empress of my heart, grant me the love that I so long since implored, that I may have the *right* and privilege to defend you against the world."

The amazement of Stella at this renewal of a former suit was so great that she could only gaze in silence upon the floor. Her heart was swollen with indignation. She thought the British Major frantic—mad—or he would not have made these rude attempts upon her heart in the moment of her isolation. She made an effort, however, to reply. She wished not to be thought in hesitation or doubt.

"Major Malman," said Stella, with a severity of look that was by no means flattering to the hopes of the officer. "had my heart inclined toward you, had I loved you to devotion, the worthless and humiliating character of your intended honor would only have excited my contempt. But it is not so; you are by no means acceptable to me; and I, a disaffected colonist, a lover of my country and those who defend the liberties of her soil, will rather depend on my own innocence for protection than upon the hand of a British officer."

The eyes of the Major flashed fearfully. Every feature expressed ferocity. His brows were dark and knitted; his hands were tightly doubled into fists; his feet were rigidly drawn up, and placed firmly on the floor, and he seemed fully prepared for some effort more hostile than could be pursued toward a lady. At length his stern mouth relaxed :

"Stella," he exclaimed, in a tone of voice more suited to his regiment, "I am your friend. I came not to insult, but to warn you of the breakers by which you are surrounded—to offer services that no other, perhaps, would render; and I sought to qualify those services in a manner that none would doubt my right to offer them. It is not in the nature of a military officer to be rash! I repeat, will you accept my assistance and my hand? I proffer them in conjunction."

"Never!" exclaimed Stella.

"Adieu, fastidious fair one," said the Major, rising excitedly from his chair. Enveloping himself in an immense horse-cloak, he repeated: "Farewell!" and, as he quitted the room, there was a savage language in his eye that did not escape the observation of the shuddering woman.

Levnox Malman was the son of a gentleman of good property in England, had been educated for the army, and, when Stella first met him, had attained the rank of Captain. They had repeated opportunities of seeing each other, and Malman became deeply enamored with her. With the consent of his father he proposed for her; the honor was declined; but so sincere was the devotion of the unsuccessful suitor, that he applied to Rufas to intercede in his behalf. The brother, however, refused to do so. He had seen sufficient of Malman to apprehend that the happiness of his sister would not be

I now grant e right was sc heart frun- u her ever, was heart and ex- pta- and my sh- ed ly 2 n premoted by such a union. Repulsed, but still unwilling to acknowledge a defeat, the pertinacious son of Mars prevailed upon the lady with whom Stella was then visiting to sue for a revision of the sentence; but there was no mitigation—the heart of the charmer was remorseless. The disconsolate lover had to rejoin his regiment, and to seek victory in the field. Nearly two years had transpired since this event, but he never forgot or forgave the rejection, and his present love was not unmixed with a malignity that hungered for revenge. Now that he had a second time committed himself to a power he could not resist, with no better fortune, he firmly resolved upon vengeance. Never was a villain in more favorable position to glut his appetite.

No sooner had Major Malman quitted the apartment than Stella threw herself upon the couch in despondency. There was a haughtiness in the manner and language of the man that cast into shadow all his affected love. This she had perceived when he had first cast himself at her feet. She always thought there was something threatening even in his love; and how much more cause had she to dread the vengeance of his anger. She saw the menace in his dark frowns as he quitted the house, and heard the irony of his words, and felt that nothing could humble their arrogance but the bravery of her brother or the impetuous wrath of the gallant Percy.

Stella now summoned to the room Caesar and Chloe, related to them frankly the charge of suspicion made by the visitor who had just left, and again implored them, as they valued her safety, to hold no communication with the slaves of their neighbors, nor to exchange a word with the idle and inquisitive soldiery or their officers. The poor slaves, trembling with apprehension, promised faithful obedience to her directions.

Again Stella was alone in her wretchedness. After profound meditation she resolved to await the arrival of events with as much fortitude as she could command. Rufus and Percy were distant though so near. A few miles separated them, but the interval was guarded both by sentinels and the terrible penalty of death. To communicate with them was utterly impossible. She could only use every precaution for her safety, and abide events. She rose from her seat, and was about to extinguish the lights, which were burning dimly, when the door opened slowly, the head of a muffled figure was introduced, and, while Stella repressed her breath at this second nocturnal visit, the figure entered, closed the door, and advanced toward her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BAFFLED WARRIOR.

MAJOR MALMAN retired from the house of Stella in a most ungovernable rage. Rejected as a lover, disdained as a man, despised as an officer of his Britannic Majesty, nothing could soothe his wounded pride. For a time he threaded the dark streets, fomenting the anger which he was hoping to appease. Fatigued at this perambulation, he repaired to his quarters, entered his room, threw himself into a chair, and indulged his ire with oaths, threats, and denunciations.

When Major Malman had honored Stella with an evening call he knew something more of her position than he stated. There were plenty of Tories who, smarting beneath the persecutions of the friends of independence, now attempted to hurl upon them indiscriminate vengeance. The Major was soon informed that Rufus was a Captain in the patriot army, and that Percy Archer, who was his devoted friend, was also supposed not to be indifferent to the sister. He therefore determined to visit Stella, to represent to her the desperate struggle in which her brother had embarked, the hopelessness of the cause for which he fought, her own forlorn, unprotected, and even abandoned situation, and then to offer her his hand. He thought such magnanimity must be esteemed—such generosity could not be refused, and he paused to consider well whether he should in any way modify the terms, as if with the fair sweet girl he was about to address it was a matter of capitulation. He was amazed and maddened when he heard his offer rejected by Stella with unconcealed scorn. He could scarcely repress the language that usually accompanied his anger, and when he withdrew from her presence he vowed to be revenged. Disguising the malice that imbibed his feelings, he desired a servant to summon the Sergeant. It was not long before he was obeyed—Sergeant Scroggins entered.

"Scroggins," said the Major, "I trust your vigilance is not relaxed. You have reported little for the last day or two."

"I endeavor to do my duty, Major," replied the Sergeant, bowing; "my men see every thing that passes; but the people of the town are well inclined."

"Be not too confident, said the Major. "I have names that are regarded with suspicion."

"They shall be watched, Major," said the Sergeant, "if you name them."

"Persons whose nearest relatives are in arms," continued the Major.

"There are several families of that class, Major," remarked the Sergeant.

"Who are in correspondence with the rebels," said the Major.

"I ask their names, Major," said the Sergeant.

"There is much mischief plotting in the city," persevered the Major, regardless of the remarks of the Sergeant, "which you ought to penetrate. If we can not apprehend the guilty, we must seize upon those next in rank—the suspected. We are among a rebellious foe—in a city of enemies—and we must exert our power to strike terror into their hearts, or we may be ruined by their machinations. You must refer to our position, Scroggins, and silence your scruples.

"My men are watchful day and night, Major," observed the Sergeant—"little escapes them."

"And on that little which you and your fellows disregard may be suspended our destruction," said the Major, in a passionate voice. "The advice I have received ought to have proceeded from you instead of the faithful royalists. Have you watched closely a house in Pearl street?"

"Several, Major," replied the confident Sergeant.

"Occupied by a young lady?" continued the Major.

"And her two slaves," added the Sergeant.

"The same," said the Major. "Is there not treason there?"

"I have invested that house as closely as a fortress, Major," replied the Sergeant, "from the moment the lady entered the city. She is a dangerous enemy, and once foiled me in the moment of triumph. I endeavored to get acquainted with her female slave, but the poor woman seemed alarmed and would not notice me. Then I observed that Caesar, the negro, daily exercised the horse. I met him, patted the animal, admired his coat, and so gained upon the weakness of his groom that he communicated every thing to me. That Rufas, the brother, was his owner, and that he was with the army of Washington. That another gentleman is also in their rank, who loves this lady, and whom this lady loves—your pardon, Major, did you speak?" asked the Sergeant, as, at this point of the recital, an oath escaped the enraged officer. But, obtaining no reply, he proceeded: "But I could extract nothing from him of a suspicious nature."

"But why did you not offer to deliver letters from the sister to the brother," exclaimed the Major, "or to that other rebel leader? We might have then induced these trim heroes to have stepped ~~within~~ ~~with~~ our lines."

"Major, I could not do that," said the Sergeant.

"The lady was less merciful with you," suggested the Major.

"She used fair strategy, Major," said the Sergeant, "and attracted my attention in one direction when it *ought* to have been intent upon another. But these young rebels will come, Major. Caesar, ignorant of the penalty, says he knows they will, and that his mistress is most anxious to see them, in order that she may arrange to quit New York."

"We will wait a few days, Seroggins," said the Major, as if by this patience to atone for the insinuation which he had addressed to the more scrupulous Sergeant. "But, is the house much visited?"

"Not at all, Major."

"Does the lady visit much?"

"She does not quit the house."

"Singular," mused the officer, but loud enough for the Sergeant to hear what was intended as a thought, "that no friend should call on her."

"I am wrong, Major," exclaimed the Sergeant; "she has received one visitor."

"Who?" said the Major, with indifference.

"A figure in disguise," said the Sergeant.

"Ha, Seroggins!" said the now animated superior. "You want to surprise me, good Seroggins. Was it man or woman?"

"A man—and so thoroughly concealed that I was deceived; but I surrounded the house upon his entry that he might not escape, and awaited his return. At length he came forth, but retreated so suddenly that I could not secure him as I intended."

"Dolt—ape—you did not lose him?" vociferated the Major, as he rose from his chair.

"I followed him—overtook him—and would have seized him," said the Sergeant, "had I not discovered—"

"What?" thundered the Major.

"That he was my commanding officer—yourself," said the Sergeant.

"Perdition!" exclaimed the Major, and he paced the room in anger.

The Sergeant was an obedient soldier. He knew his duty, and rigorously performed it; but he would not be made the instrument of injustice even in the punishment of those whom he, in his loyalty, thought extravagant offenders. He was willing, nay anxious, to detect the existence of crime; but he would not be the agent to temptation that the objects of such machinations might be betrayed. He was annoyed at the device by which he had lost his prisoners; but there was a chivalric gallantry about this bold subaltern that made him appreciate the artifice, though somewhat anxious for an honorable revenge.

The conduct of the Major was to the Sergeant paradoxical. He had seen his officer enter the very house the inmate of which he

wished to be charged with treason. He had, however, given him a severe rebuke, and had convinced him, at the same time, how ungenerous was his reproof for lack in vigilance. The Sergeant was gazing upon the violence of the tortured man, when he abruptly paused in his rapid walk, and, in a voice almost indistinct with passion, exclaimed :

"Look well to that house, Seroggins ! You have my commands to do so. Let a report be made to me each day of everyone that passes in or out, whence they come, and whither they go. I tell you treason is hatching there, and should you be negligent in your watch, you surely will be punished as an abettor."

The Sergeant saw the violent feelings of the Major, and was about to withdraw, when a sharp knocking was heard at the door. He opened it to find one of his own men, who had followed in such haste that he was unable to utter a word. The breathless messenger, perceiving the Sergeant, motioned for him to withdraw from the room, which he was about to do, when the Major roughly and savagely demanded the cause of all this pantomime.

"It is only one of my men, Major," said the Sergeant, "who, not finding me at the guard, came on here."

"A man—a cloak—a figure!" exclaimed the sentinel.

"An adventure, surely, Seroggins," said the Major, with a little more interest and a little less rage.

"Come, Sergeant," urged the messenger, who now began to recover his voice, "'tis the same person that you couln't catch afore. We'll have him now."

"What means this madman?" said the Major. "Where does he do duty?"

"At Miss Westville's house," replied the Sergeant, with reluctance.

"What saw you there, man?" demanded the Major, with a rapidity that made the soldier recede.

"A person entered the house, your honor," said the soldier, making the military salute, "wrapped in a cloak, and I saw the end of a sword below it."

"Back to your post!" vociferated the Major, "back to your post, and remember that it is death if he escapes!"

The soldier, acting upon fear of the threat, retreated at a pace that must have quickly made him again breathless. The Sergeant, however, paused a moment. He saw the savage joy that sparkled in the fierce eye of his superior. He saw his demoniac smile as he muttered indistinctly. At length he exclaimed.

"By all the powers of earth and heaven, we have her now! and she has entangled in the meshes which entwine her and the rebel Major. Hasten, Seroggins, and take with you such a guard as may give the maccaroni to the provost-marshals and the maid at least to scorn. Take them alive. Be guilty of no such mercy as to kill them—let them be tormented. Oh, what an hour of ecstasy! Oh, what a

night of bliss! What poetry there is in hope w^t. n^t hope is in revenge! Now, quick, quiet, and drag those prisoners before me that I may enjoy their grief! The remembrance of this hour of joy will lighten all the sufferings I have or may yet endure."

The Sergeant, a man of war, who was accustomed to regard horrors with indifference, listened to these brutal words with feelings of disgust. He, nevertheless, bowed to the orders of his superior, and quitted his presence with a determination to perform his duty, though he never before experienced the unloyal sentiment to befriend the enemy of his king.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MUFFLED FIGURE.

STELLA leaped from the couch, on which she was reclining as the door closed upon the startling apparition, and she was about to scream in terror at this second invasion of her privacy, when a finger was raised as if to implore silence; then the figure cast aside the cloak and disclosed the handsome person of a field officer of the American army—Percy Archer!

"Stella, dearest Stella!" he exclaimed, clasping her in his arms. "I already read in those sweet eyes the rebuke that must not be uttered. I could not endure a longer separation until assured that you are in safety under this right royal protection. Other battles we must fight; but our recruits are raw and unused to fire. They are also undisciplined, badly clothed and provisioned, and devoid of many of those comforts which assist in giving firmness to the heart, and they are consequently discontent and many have abandoned us. Thus we may not just now be able to resist the thousands of scarlet coats that contribute to the gayety of the city, but have to retreat. As each day will place me further from you, I resolved to visit you while these calamities are in abeyance."

"But Percy," said Stella, "you know not the magnitude of the danger which you tempt."

"There is no price, dear Stella," replied Percy, "that I would not gladly pay for the cheer of an hour of your sweet presence."

"Oh, Percy," exclaimed Stella, "you know not the surveillance to which all residing here are subjected. But an hour since I received a visit from a British officer, intimating that I am suspected to be in correspondence with their enemies, and that my actions will be strictly guarded. What if you be seen to enter here?"

"Allow not such treacherous thoughts to absorb the happiness of

the passing hour," said Percy. "But you have not named the bearer of this alarming threat?"

"It was Major Malman," replied Stella, with a slight blush.

"I remember his evil name," remarked Percy, "and know enough of him to pronounce this visit a brutal intrusion of common courtesy. Oh, how I wish that I had reached here one hour earlier, that I might have dyed that royal scarlet that he so proudly wears in a deeper though less pure hue."

"Let not me either cause rash words or rash deeds in you, Percy," said Stella; "it would desecrate the sacred sword of liberty to draw it in a private brawl. Close not your eyes to the danger of your position. If you love me, Percy, fly. Your life is imperiled by your presence here, and, much as I have wished for you in my loneliness and sorrow, nothing now will afford me satisfaction but your absence."

"Be calm, dearest Stella," said Percy, with emotion; "and if my presence contributes so much anguish to a breast I would rather die than pain, I will do your wishes. But, I am unsuspected. I came stealthily through the enemy's lines, passed their rather idle sentinels; advanced by lonely ways not yet perhaps known to them, and, reaching this street, watched your home some minutes in the shadow. All was quiet, and every thing looked like indifference and safety but to be still further assured I, like a careful soldier in an enemy's country, examined the recesses, the doorways, and dark places, and while all seemed deserted, I entered here, securing the door so that no one can follow."

"Still, I can not share your confidence," said Stella. "There is a foreboding of impending danger in my mind, which is not lessened by the cautious manner in which you have committed this great imprudence."

"Dismiss these thoughts, dear Stella," said Percy, "which like a cloud, so darken the luster of our meeting. The little peril in seeking you is surmounted, and the same good fortune which guided me to your feet will protect me to the camp on my return."

"I am rejecting a solace for which I have much wished in thus hastening your departure," said Stella, with great emotion; "but it is a tribute to your safety—to your life. Resist me not, dear Percy; but fly while yet the door is open to your escape."

"My dearest Stella," said Percy, soothingly, alarmed at her great agitation, "I will return. I will quit your presence, this house, and this captured city, although I feel that you are laboring under the excitement so recently induced by the threats of that ruthless scoundrel of an officer. But why should you remain? Would it not be better to quit the city than be the object of the suspicion and persecution of its present governors?"

"Yes, Percy," replied Stella, "this is no longer a residence for me. I have entertained the subject of a removal since the day of my return, and now that I am I am regarded suspiciously and my

actions watched, I am firm in my resolve. Tell Rufus therefore, of my wish, which I am sure he will facilitate, especially when he is aware of the vicinity of Major Malman."

"I will gladly be the bearer of intelligence so unknown to us both," said Percy. "We shall, no doubt, be kept in activity all the winter, and shall feel that you will be safer in Philadelphia than here. But now, dear Stella—"

"Hark, Percy," exclaimed Stella, involuntarily clutching his arm. "I hear footsteps near the door."

"Imagination, Stella," replied Percy after listening an instant. "Your fears have overcome your courage. In these times of war the daughters as well as the sons of America need metallic nerves."

"Hush, you are wrong—they are near the door," continued Stella, greatly terrified. "They are trying to enter. They are the British soldiers. They have seen you Percy. Fly! If you love me, seek your preservation and save us both!"

It was true. The ready ear of Stella had detected the advance of the stealthy spies. They made an effort to effect an entrance, and when that failed, they summoned the servant by a rather rude and continued knocking on the door. Stella stood in the center of the room, her hands clasped in the agony of despair as she thought of the terrible consequences to Percy. He, however, exhorting her to be calm, looked carefully at his pistols, drew his sword, and placed himself at the door of the parlor. The clamor at the outer entrance increased. Chloe, not daring to admit those without, rushed to the parlor to seek refuge with her mistress, when, perceiving Percy, stern and determined, with a drawn sword, she fell to the floor, and sunk into unconsciousness. This incident reanimated Stella. Advancing toward Percy, she smiled in his rigid face, and said in a voice too sweet to be resisted:

"Percy, they have traced you. They seek your life. They are suspicious in their search for blood, and would not assail the front of the house before the back of it was well guarded. But there is a resource, despite their skill and foresight. This passage," continued Stella, opening an unseen door, which betrayed a dark, narrow passage between walls. "conducts to the third house beyond—it is our property, but is now unoccupied and unguarded, and will afford the only means of avoiding your pursuers."

"What, Stella," exclaimed Percy, indignantly, "think you that I will retreat thus cowardly and leave you unprotected in the power of these demons?"

"Shall I be less in their power if you remain?" asked Stella, who was fearful every moment that the door would be forced. "You, an unassisted man, stand bravely and undauntedly in my defense; but the British can oppose to you an army. Should you be taken, Percy, you will be treated as a spy, and they would find some rigorous law to punish me because I gave you shelter in my

ance of their proclamation. It may be a question of life or death to both. Are we to be destroyed or saved?"

"I will go, dearest Stella, I will go," said Percy, after a moment's struggle with other feelings.

Percy stepped over the prostrate body of the negress, which was still upon the floor, and clasping his beloved Stella to his heart, he passed within the dead-door which Stella had only just time to close, when the assailants burst the outer door, and rushed into the parlor. Stella, in the dignity of her grace and beauty, confronted the marauders, and after a few minutes of silence, during which she scrutinized the soldiers with great severity, she said in a commanding voice :

"To what intemperance am I to attribute this violence? Is a lady, who dwells beneath the assured protection of the English banner, to be liable to such riotous invasion as this? Behold one of the consequences of your fury," and she pointed to the motionless form of the negress still upon the floor, "and had I been as accessible to fear, I might have been as helpless. I ask again, what means this unauthorized outrage?"

"Madame," said a soldier, now advancing in front of those who stood within the parlor, at the same time bowing low, "your servant, Sergeant Jeopardy Scroggins of the Fiftieth, we have met before," and he looked significantly. "I trust my men have not been unnecessarily rude; but military orders are imperative, and where doors are not opened to their summons, it is not unlawful to force them. I have to inform you that a disguised person was seen to enter this house. My instructions are to seize him." Then, addressing himself to his men, he said : "Guard well the doors while I search the house;" and turning again toward Stella, he continued : "Perhaps, Madame, you will conduct me."

The confidence which Stella had assumed she could not maintain. It was evident that Percy had been there, and she followed wherever the prying Sergeant led. At length, they entered a room apart from the rest. The Sergeant placed the light upon the table, and, turning abruptly toward Stella he said, in a tone little louder than a whisper :

"I know he is not here; I knew it when I entered. It is in my power, however, to seize him; but, tell me truly: is he come here as a spy or as a friend?"

Stella gazed in astonishment in the face of the Sergeant. Truth and misery seemed to dwell there. She hesitated, and then boldly replied :

"On my honor, he came in devotion to me; but, he must be—he is—far beyond your power."

"You are in error," replied the Sergeant. "The secret passage is not unknown to me, nor is the house unoccupied to which your visitor has fled. *I have men there.*"

A scream escaped Stella. She clung to the wall for support and

grasped as if her life was ebbing, for she had unconsciously ushered Percy into the very jaws of death. The Sergeant, feeling acutely the anguish he had caused, sought to alleviate it, and said :

"Courage, lady; I have your word for the honor of your friend, and he has nothing to fear. He shall be free, for I believe that his visit is not one of treason; that the object of my officer is one of vengeance, not of duty, *I know.*"

These words were as electric as those which had preceded them. They recalled Stella from despondency, and as soon as she recovered from the first three of the reaction, she approached the Sergeant, pressed his rough hand between her own, bathed it with her tears, and said, with the solemn emphasis of inspiration :

"May the mercy which you so generously extend this night, be meted to you in your greatest need!"

The Sergeant smiled in thankfulness, and, while his ear still retained the sweetness of the voice and his heart the gratefulness of the sentiment, his men—the watchful sentinels—thundered through the house and up the staircase, the cry of—

"The city is on fire!"

The Sergeant and Stella rushed together to the window. The flames and smoke rose higher than the houses, and when the Sergeant saw the locality from which they came, a shudder passed over his frame. With almost a shriek, he exclaimed :

"My wife—my child—my poor, dear Margaretté;" and without further notice of Stella, or thought of the business of his visit, he leaped down the staircase, and, still uttering the same cries, he left the house, followed by his men.

The fire raged in Broadway, burning the houses on both sides with resistless fury. In vain the inhabitants and the military struggled to master this fearful element—its ravages seemed to increase with the efforts to subdue it. Its awful roar silenced all other sounds. It illuminated the whole city with its flames, and blackened the buildings with its dense clouds of smoke, while the waters of the harbor were covered with the fragments of its violence.

Stella descended to the parlor. Chloe had recovered. She had risen from the floor, and now stood gazing upon this new terror from the window. But the fire, with all its appalling features, its lofty flames, its intense heat, its smoke, and its destruction, which might involve her dwelling in ruin in another minute, was not the absorbing horror of Stella's mind. The danger of Percy was firmly imprinted there; and now that the kind Sergeant, by sorrows of his own, had been attracted from his premise, she resolved to attempt the rescue of her beloved Percy alone. She knew that this period of confusion and alarm was not likely to beget increased vigilance, and had but little doubt that the guard in the unoccupied house had followed to the fire. Stella left the abstracted Chloe to wonder at the glare, and, passing from the doorway, hastened to the house whither the passage conducted Percy. The door was open--she walked in. The

apartments were lighted by that fearful torch which was devastating the city; but they were all alone and silent. She entered the room where was the exit from the secret passage. The panel was tightly closed. She knocked—no sound returned. It was plain that Percy had left; but, whether in the custody of those whom the Sergeant had stationed there, or whether he had eluded them, was still a mystery. With a palpitating heart, uncheered by this visitation, she quitted the house, and, just as she entered the street, a shriek, deep and piercing, met her ear. It proceeded from a woman coming rapidly toward Stella. She was bending fondly over her child, which she pressed tightly to her breast. She seemed in frantic agitation, and alternately uttered loud and thrilling screams and wailing sobs. When she perceived Stella she exclaimed, in a loud, shrill voice:

"Run! run! It's coming—it will come! Look at it on the houses, on the roads, in the air, on you, on me, on my poor babe! Oh, how it scorches! Run! run! But for a rebel I should be mad, and my poor babe a cinder!"

Then shuddering and folding her arms closer round her child, she uttered another thrilling scream, and hastened onward.

Stella felt great sympathy for the frenzied state of the poor sufferer. Following her, just as she reached her house, she caught her arm.

"My friend," said Stella, kindly, "you are in misfortune. I am also a poor child of sorrow—so that in this we are sisters. This is my residence. Come in—remain here to-night, and in the morning, when you are more composed, I will accompany you home."

"Home!" exclaimed the woman, with a look that showed the agonizing association it conjured up, "I have no home—it is gone—it is in ashes!"

"Then accept the shelter of my roof—at least to-night," said Stella.

"Good lady," exclaimed the woman, resuming the excitement in which Stella had first seen her, "there is no safety here. There is too much light. I want darkness. I want to hide my child from all this burning light."

"It is dark within," pleaded Stella, "and your infant will be in greater safety than in these dangerous streets."

The woman took little notice of this last invitation, but stood gazing intently upon the earth, when Stella, taking advantage of this placid state, conducted her gently into the house, where she sunk with exhaustion upon a couch. In the mean time the inert faculties of Chlœe had become more active. She had a dim recollection of the swordsman who caused her insensibility, and of the rougher sons of Mars who had reclaimed her; but these had been dissipated by the scene on which she had been so intently gazing as it filled the air with light and heat, and which she thought was some demonstration of the "Britishers," of whom she had heard such wondrous tales. She now, however, assisted in the charity of her mistress and cher-

ished the slumbering infant, while Stella applied such restoratives to the mother as soon induced a return of consciousness. When she beheld the kindness with which she was treated, the gentleness of Chloe to her child, and the safety of both, she no longer exhibited those maniacal symptoms which had first attracted the tenderness of Stella. Another hour of tranquillity, and she could look back upon the occurrences of the night with more calmness, and soon volunteered to recount to Stella every circumstance.

"I was retiring to bed," she said, "when I was alarmed by a cry of fire. I went down stairs to inquire into the truth and found that several houses were in flames, including that in which I resided, which was burning so rapidly as to prevent my return to the rescue of my poor child. There were many men, and I implored them to assist in saving the infant; but they did not regard me, when a stranger, muffled in a cloak, who had heard my prayers, advanced and said, 'I will save your child, my good woman, only direct me to the room.' I did so. He rushed into the flames, and I thought that he never could come forth again, they were so fierce; but he appeared soon after from out the raging fire, and, placing the child in my arms, he said, 'I am a rebel, in the phraseology of your army. I love a lady in this city who is persecuted by one of your officers. The only kindness I ask of you is to extend your assistance to this lady whenever she may require it. She will know you by this, and what is yet more important, will know that she can confide in you.' He was handsome and an officer. I know not how we parted. I did not even thank him. My eyes were dazzled and weakened by the flames—my heart was filled with feelings never there before, and, although I could have yielded him my life, and felt that my soul was not half large enough for the gratefulness he had excited, yet I spoke not a word. Nor do I remember more. The bracelet he gave me is upon my arm, and there it shall remain until I find a claimant, to do which I will walk this city day after day. I will befriend her with my life, if necessary."

As the woman concluded, she raised her arm that the precious talisman upon it might be examined. Stella, diverted at the romance of the gallant salamander who had thus boldly defied the flames to save a child, bent down to view the ornament, when an ejaculation of joy and astonishment escaped her, and she exclaimed:

"It was Percy! He has escaped! The armlet is mine!"

Down on her knees the woman fell. Tears flowed from her eyes in streams, and grateful exclamations fell from her lips. She embraced the knees of Stella, vowed herself a slave, and begged that she would again pronounce the name of the hero who had saved her child, that she might write it on her heart and never forget it in her prayers, and that she might instruct her child that the letters which formed his name were sacred to its life.

At length Stella induced the grateful creature to rise from the floor, and to listen to language which taught that to the Dispenser

and not to the agent in these great mercies are our best feelings due. The thankful woman bowed submissively to the sweet voice she heard, but she only reverenced her monitor the more.

The night advanced. The fire still raged, rising in broad sheets of flame high in the atmosphere, and reducing to houseless wanderers hundreds of frantic people, who, joining their screams to the roar of the fierce element, increased the terror of this tragic scene.

In the midst of this frightful clamor, a summons was sounded upon the outer door of Stella's residence. Caesar was away, the child still slumbered in the arms of Clélie, and, therefore, Stella responded to the continued knocking. She opened the door, and there stood a British soldier. Stella started back at sight of that ominous uniform, a source of so much sorrow and alarm to her; but the man of war seemed now a man of peace, if not a suppliant, for he leaned against the door-easing in great exhaustion.

"Shun me not, gentle lady," said the soldier, in piteous accents; "I come to tell you that your friend escaped—to give you joy not pain. I withdrew the guard as I passed, and thus his course was clear."

Stella listened in gratefulness and delight, while she regarded the speaker with the deepest sympathy—it was the worthy Sergeant. He was disguised in his extreme agony and disorder of dress. His eyes were protruding and bloodshot—his cheeks were hollowed—his nostrils expanded from the effect of his rapid respirations—and his lips were colorless, and he seemed like the sufferer of years instead of an hour. Stella remembered the cry with which he had left, and she feared to ask him to confirm the dreadful fatality she thought she read so plainly in his face.

"Come in, my friend, come in," said Stella, "and permit me to administer something to relieve you. I feel sensibly the anxiety which you have exhibited to lighten my anguish, while your own heart is heavily burdened with affliction."

The Sergeant staggered in. Stella ushered him to a quiet room. He sunk into a chair, uttered a deep groan, and, as he reclined upon his seat, his closed eyes, wan and pallid cheeks, and depending arms, stretched to the floor on either side, caused Stella to fear that he was lifeless. She was about to seek refuge from this death scene, when the sleeping child, in the adjoining room, awoke and began to speak those words within its narrow powers.

"Ah! my pretty bird, are you chirping still?" said the Sergeant in a weak voice.

Then he unclosed the heavy lids which sealed his eyes, while the voice of the infant was the only sound that broke the quietness. They wandered round the room in silent inquiry. They rested nowhere. They sought an object they could not see and yet felt sure was there. Then a still louder exclamation came from the merry child. The ghastly Sergeant rose softly from what Stella had just thought was

his death swoon. She was appalled at his ghastly appearance, and receded to the door; but he exclaimed, in almost frantic accents :

"Where does that voice come from?

"From a child in the next room," replied Stella.

"Does it live?" exclaimed the still incredulous Sergeant.

"Yes," responded Stella.

"And its mother?" vociferated the Sergeant, as if it were an hysterical effort of which he feared to hear the answer.

"Is with it," said Stella.

The Sergeant no longer doubted. With a bound he reached the door of the apartment.

"Wife! wife!" he screamed, as he advanced; and, as that dear cry rung in the matron's ears, she responded by exclaiming :

"My husband! my husband!"

They embraced each other, kissed their dear child, and then kneeled before Stella.

The pure-hearted Stella pointed upward. The rebuke was felt, and together all acknowledged the grace where thankfulness was due.

When the Sergeant heard from his wife the miraculous preservation of his child, and of the recognition of the rebel hero by their lovely hostess, he turned toward Stella and said :

"How much I owe that gallant foe; how little I am able to repay him. Tell him, fair lady, that there is one great heart in the enemy's camp, and more than one who is well convinced of the noble and generous nature of your people."

"You owe the advantages that you enjoy to your own sense of justice," said Stella. "Had you been as vindictive as your Major, you might now be childless and a widower."

The call of duty now compelled the delighted Sergeant to repair to the scene of the conflagration. It was still devastating the city, though, after great efforts, it was finally arrested; but not until it had reduced to ashes nearly five hundred houses, or an eighth of the whole city, and rendered destitute an army of inhabitants.

The next morning Stella was one of the most sedulous in contributing to the comfort of this desolate tribe; but, despite all her efforts great misery was endured, for, as the fire was ungenerously attributed by the British to the incendiary predisposition of the Americans, little or no sympathy was exhibited by them for the poor sufferers.

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CHAPTER X.

UNAPPEASED VENGEANCE.

Now did the Major think to gratify his desire for revenge. Now did he hold this fair woman at his mercy. He already pictured the discomfited beauty and her confederate, be he brother or brother's friend, within his power, and thus fed on the banquet before the feast was called. The atmosphere of the room was too confined for the largeness of his joy, and he went forth into the streets. They were no longer dark. Those groping, narrow ways which led to Stella's house were now easily threaded, yet he did not observe what it was that made obscurity so clear. There were cries, there was agitation, and both were indicative of calamity; but his ear, like his soul, could only relish one particular sound, one voice of lamentation — the cry of Stella for mercy.

Presently a soldier rushed past him; he was in haste, but the Major saw enough to distinguish the Sergeant.

"Seroggins," he cried, "you are going for me. I am here, my good fellow. I was impatient. I could not wait."

It was the Sergeant. He heard his name pronounced. He knew the voice of his officer, but he did not pause. He was frantic with alarm.

"Look up, look up, Major," he exclaimed. "The city is on fire."

"Ha!" ejaculated the Major, the whole mystery of this flood of light now just occurring to his absorbed mind. Still, revenge was uppermost in his heart—he felt the fire within his breast more than the conflagration of the houses, and, following the Sergeant, he cried: "The spy—the spy! where is he?"

"My wife," exclaimed the Sergeant, making all haste toward his quarters.

"The lady! where have you confined her?" again queried the Major.

"My poor child!" was the only response of the Sergeant, and with this cry he disappeared.

The officer still pursued, and when he came upon the scene of disaster, he saw a woman wringing her hands in agony, and shrieking for her babe. A commanding figure bounded from the flames, and, approaching the despairing mother, placed her infant in her arms.

Thanks poured from the grateful parent's mouth, and he then attempted to retire.

The Major watched this stranger narrowly, and when the cloak unfolded, it disclosed a uniform that was not British. Then unmindful of the gallant action he had witnessed, and regardless of the charity that induced it, he grasped his pistol, advanced, and leveling it at the unsuspecting stranger's head, fired, exclaiming :

"Traitor, die!"

But a boy, who had eyed the Major as keenly as he had observed the stranger, sprung forward, dashed up the officer's arm, the pistol exploded, and the stranger was unharmed. The Major turned upon the delinquent in terrible anger, when he perceived his favorite attendant—his faithful Claude.

"Claude," exclaimed the foiled man, "would you have an incendiary escape? He is a rebel. It is he and others of his class who fired the city." Then crying aloud to some soldiers, he continued • "Seize that man—that rebel in the cloak."

But the rebel was too dextrous and too intrepid, and made choice of an avenue of escape which appalled these fierce pursuers. He entered the flames through which he had appeared, and no one followed.

The night was one of such agitation that it was late in the morning before the Major found the Sergeant. Neither had slept, and both were blackened with smoke, and were suffering from fatigue, but the Major's vengeance was active.

"Sereggins," he exclaimed, "where have you secured your prisoner?"

"He escaped," was the reply.

The veins on the forehead of the officer were swollen with the violence of his passion. The Sergeant saw the coming storm, but he could not avoid it.

"There is villainy in this—gross villainy!" said the Major
"Did you enter the house?"

"I did, and posted guards in back and front," said the Sergeant; "and, when I could find no one, the lady confessed that the visitor had escaped before I entered.

"Ha!" said the Major. "Did she acknowledge that a rebel had been there?"

"She did, Major," said the Sergeant, with reluctance.

"Then this false woman shall receive the punishment of both," said the Major.

The interview between the officer and his Sergeant ended thus abruptly; but the latter saw the malignity in the countenance of his superior.

That evening Stella was summoned before the council, where a number of officers, collected round a table, were profoundly grave. They were in regimentals, and, upon her entrance, rose and bowed. The General soon entered, and then the business commenced.

"I trust, Miss Westville," said the General, "that our formal

summons has not occasioned you alarm; but as we have encountered you in the field and in the drawing-room, somewhat to our mortification, we now view you as rather a formidable enemy, and are compelled to ask an explanation of a circumstance in which you are again a prominent actor. We are here to repress with the sword the rebellion of the colonists of his most gracious majesty, and those who claim our protection by residing in this city must conform to our regulations. One of the most important is, that no one shall hold correspondence with the rebels. It is charged that you have violated that ordinance, and on that point I would ask your explanation."

"I have little to explain, sir," replied Stella, "but my statement will be one of truth. I love my country and its liberties. I have a brother on yonder heights, determined to dispute with you every inch of ground until he dies. I have, too, other friends in that devoted army whom I revere. A few evenings since Major Malman, whom I had known in England, called to warn me that I was suspected to be in correspondence with the enemy. Up to that moment I had heard nothing from my brother, or from any other person of the army, directly or indirectly. The Major addressed me in a spirit which I resented, and he left my residence in great excitement, while I remained in the highest indignation at his really uncalled for conduct and his threats.

"I had not recovered from the agitation of this visit, when a strange figure presented itself before me. I rose from my chair in alarm, and when the figure ascertained he was not pursued, he cast off his cloak and disclosed an officer of the rebel army. I was deeply affected and unexpectedly troubled at this rashness, and urged him to instant flight. He was the friend of my brother—the friend of my childhood, and I dreaded the consequence of his daring. While I implored him to leave, there came a rough knocking at the door and a demand to be admitted. The visitor escaped. Sergeant Seroggins entered with his men, to whom I acknowledge that an officer of the enemy had been in the house, but for no treacherous purpose.

"It is said," remarked the General, who had listened with great attention, "that this same officer was afterward seen at the fire. Have you reason to believe that he was there?"

"He was there," said Stella, "for he rescued the Sergeant's child from destruction, and sent me a symbol that he had done so."

"There is no need to afford you further trouble," said the General, who seemed much impressed with the integrity of her statement, as well as by the beauty and elegance of her person; "but in our duty as soldiers, and with a sagacious enemy so near, we are naturally suspicious. There is, however, one observation which I think I may offer with some advantage—that there is a terrible punishment visited upon the person who penetrates an enemy's encampment in disguise, and it is also utterly disallowed that such delin-

quent should be assisted in an escape even by a lady, whatever her relation may be to him. Still, had a daughter of my own acted in the manner which you did, I could not, and would not, have reproached her; I would only have cautioned her on the future."

The whole assembly concurred in the sentiments of the General, and Stella quitted the apartment with far more satisfaction than she had entered it. This satisfaction was increased the following day, on being informed by the Sergeant, that no special espial would longer be directed to her house or actions.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FLIGHT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the expostulations of Stella, Percy would rather have remained and confronted his enemies, than have made an ignominious retreat; but her distress conquered his daring, and he yielded the felicity for which he had risked so much, and fled. He plunged along the dark and narrow way until he reached the place of exit; but here paused, for he distinctly heard voices engaged in conversation. Then he heard a loud cry, as if of astonishment or alarm, and then a rush from the room. Then all was silent for a while, when he ventured to unclose the door of his sanctuary. The room was unoccupied; but it was brilliantly lighted by some invisible agency. Still, there was no sound, and he proceeded to the door. The street was abandoned; but the light was still more brilliant than within, accompanied by a noise in the air like the rushing of great waters. It was then he perceived that New York was on fire!

Percy hastened to the source of this monstrous glare, and there saw a woman in despair at the peril of her child. His heart was touched at her grief. He rescued the infant, and, while presenting it to its almost maniac parent, was recognized as an American soldier, shot at by Major Malman, and pursued by several of his regiment; but he redeemed himself from this last danger in a manner which astonished the beholders. He had observed, when seeking the infant, that the flames just at that point formed merely a thin curtain, although it seemed so fierce, and that beyond was comparative freedom. He therefore drew his cloak around him and rushed into this fiery screen, whither those who sought his blood dared not to follow. He proceeded with the utmost speed along the illuminated streets, that he might regain the greater security of the country, and thus reach the patriot camp. Passing through the mazy woods, and, with some

difficulty avoiding the swamps, he reached that point of the British lines through which he had stolen earlier in the evening; but, to his dismay, he found that the sentinels were now doubled. The extraordinary brightness of the heavens had apprised the officers of some calamity at a distance, and had induced them to take this precaution.

Disappointed, though not discouraged, he made every attempt to deceive the faithful soldiers. He practiced the wile of the Indian, and crept upon the earth from bramble to bramble, and from bush to bush; but, even the little noise indispensable to such a stealthy movement, and which scarcely disturbed the stillness of the night, did not escape the ear of the practiced soldier. The night was fast waning. He therefore resolved to search for some less guarded point, and, for this purpose, plunged deeper into the woods. While advancing with rapid strides, and with all the vigor that peril and hope inspired, he suddenly beheld, proceeding at the same quick pace, though more noiseless than himself, and almost at his elbow, the specter! The blood of Percy, which had been heated by his exertions and his fears, now chilled in his veins, as if his miraculous visitor instilled some of the dampness of the grave into these channels. It soon spoke:

"Why this haste?" it asked.

"I am walking for my life," replied Percy, abruptly.

"This is the road to death," remarked the specter.

A shudder passed over Percy. He could not pronounce a word.

"But you have been seeking death all night," continued his tormentor. "Your first attempt, was an hour after twilight, when you passed these lines—your second, an hour later, when you nearly involved a lady in the same destruction—again, when you restored a child, a British babe, to its weeping mother, for which you were gratefully shot at by a British officer—and, now, before the hour-glass shall run a tenth its span, unless you abate your pace, you will have reached the goal where the sorrows of earth end, and those of the grave will begin."

"What way shall I turn?" asked Percy, in amazement at the creature's knowledge.

The specter looked up and down the whole British lines, as if his eyes could penetrate both night and distance, and then replied: "There is one weak point; but it is far off, and the morning is approaching. You must hasten, for you have a rival in the east, and with his first rays your treason will be disclosed."

"Treason?" repeated Percy, interrogatively.

"That is the term used in this camp for such an offense as yours," sneered the specter, slyly, "and the punishment is yet more ignominious."

Percy did not reply. There was an expression of exultation in the last remark that made him doubt whether he ought to confide in

such a shadowy adviser; but not caring to exhibit further indecision, he determined to follow it.

"Be careful," remarked the specter, as they passed on their way, "how you again intrust yourself into a cage where the bars are muskets, and the keepers wary soldiers."

"I will remember your caution," replied Percy.

No pace seemed too rapid for the nimble stranger, and though the perspiration poured from the face of Percy, in his great efforts to outrun the guide, the latter seemed wholly unaffected by the effort. At length they reached a grove where a sentinel was placed. The ghostly guide, pointing to this well-guarded post, said :

"There is the only weakness in the British lines!"

Percy gazed in astonishment in the face to which he had so much aversion. It was monstrous, he thought, to lead him thus for safety into danger. The soldier—powerful, erect, and tall—paced to and fro his walk with confidence, and even while they stood there, the cry of "All's well!" which sounded along the line from the East to the Hudson River, was responded to by him. When Percy accidentally broke a twig, the sentinel paused, holding his gun menacingly. Such vigilance as this was now exhibited to him as weakness! He was inclined to upbraid this perfidious guide, but he repressed his anger and observed

"That sentinel is too watchful to be passed."

"Man discerns but little," said the specter; "I see not with the eyes that blind you. You must pass that man or die."

"How can I sufficiently conceal myself?" asked Percy.

"Concealment is not needed," said the specter; then turning toward the east, he added: "Yonder will soon appear my signal to depart. Be bold,—be prompt,—or if you have not courage for the trial, await the Provost Marshal."

"I fear nothing," said Percy.

"Then advance or perish," exclaimed the guide, with a vehemence so terrible that Percy started from the ground. He saw that day would dawn, and he determined to make the venture, though it seemed like walking into the jaws of death. He therefore advanced. The sentinel still paced to and fro—still paused at intervals, and though Percy thought his cause most desperate, he continued to approach until he had reached within ten yards of the sentry. Then the soldier stopped. He listened, inclined his ear and body forward, covering the body of Percy with his musket, while his hand was placed firmly on the trigger. This was a terrible position, and the patriot only expected death. He instinctively looked toward the monster who had thus decoyed him within the meshes of the enemy. He was just perceptible. Percy saw a horrid smile upon his ghastly visage, and the specter disappeared.

He was recalled from the feeling of terror which pervaded him, to his imminent peril. The warden had not moved, nor spoken, but still seemed vigilant and determined. Percy moved slightly, so

to withdraw his body from the range of the sentinel's weapon. He offered no opposing movement, and Percy, still in greater wonder, approached still closer to his enemy. Then, again, the cry, "All's well!" ran along the line, and the sentinel, recovering his position, gave to his comrades the reassurance of the safety of his post, by exclaiming aloud, "All's well!" and resumed his lonely round. Percy, however, had looked well into his face, and there he encountered the glaring eye and motionless eyelid of the somnambulist! The sentinel had slumbered upon his post, and, although awake to all his other duties, was really deaf to that so important to the security of the camp.

Thus Percy escaped this last danger between himself and his own regiment. It was day before he reached his quarters, and here he was overcome by exhaustion. On the following morning he revealed to Rufus his adventures. The more discreet brother of Stella severely condemned the proceeding. Both, however, resolved that Stella should be removed as soon as possible; but more active military occupations rendered this not directly practicable. They were able, however, to transmit to her unsealed letters through the medium of officers who were exchanged, assuring her that she should be removed at some early period, and proceed at once to Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MAJOR AT HIS QUARTERS.

MAJOR MALMAN was present when Stella appeared before the Council. He thought she looked more beautiful than ever, and his heart warmed with the confidence that the decision of the tribunal before which she stood, would soon cause her to rejoice at his intercession in her behalf. How much was he astonished—how much disgrimed—when, by an artless and lucid avowal of all that had inspired, Stella gained the admiration of those harsh military leaders who always upheld the policy of severe examples, where their orders were thus openly defied. He could remain for no other business, but affected indisposition, and returned home. There he closed the door against intrusion, and his eyes against the light of heaven, and plunging his head between his hands as his elbows rested on the table, he gave free expression to his malignity. He now had ascertained that this visitor was the rebel Major, who had purchased even the gratitude of Serroggins by restoring his child, and whom he would have shot but for the intemperate conduct of his servant, Claude.

Days and weeks passed, and the Major still nursed his rancor without having seen a fitting hour for vengeance, when he received orders to prepare to quit the city with his regiment. It was resolved by General Howe to occupy Philadelphia, and, although the determination and the achievement were by no means equal—which the sequel proved—the proud Briton thought them so, and the Major's regiment was to form a portion of the triumphant force. The Major was no coward. He thought battle a pastime, and he liked activity; though he was not disposed to quit the vicinity of Stella. Still, preparations must be made. He therefore summoned Claude, that he might dismiss the necessary preliminaries from his mind.

"We are ordered to quit the city, Claude," said the Major as his servant appeared, "and I have to fight our way to Philadelphia—you will see it on the map."

The boy answered with a melancholy smile.

"You are pleased, Claude," continued the Major; "to me, you are a paradox, for, when I last entered battle it seemed to sadden your heart that a soldier should undergo such peril."

"Oh, sir," replied the boy, in a voice full of feeling, "I feared the consequences to you; but I am tired of this idle, slothful life, especially when I see that it has dangers as formidable as those of war."

"What mean you, boy?" demanded the Major.

"That in you, inaction has been perilous to your heart," replied Claude.

"Claude!" exclaimed the Major, sternly.

"Do you imagine," said Claude, "that I have not observed that pallid face, those sullen fits of abstraction, and that, loving you as I do, I should not seek the cause? With sorrow I see that all this change has been effected in the gallant Major Malman by the fair face of a rebel daughter. Did you come here to love? Were you commissioned for *tuis* species of subjugation? No, no! Therefore do I welcome the more cheerful sounds of the cannon—the threatening language of the musket—the carnage of the sword, rather than see you the slave of an infatuation in which it is almost treason to indulge."

The boy spoke with great vehemence, while his face burned with blushes or anger. The Major regarded him severely, and then the eyes of the boy fell to the ground, their brilliant flashes were subdued, and he seemed more like a penitent than the accuser of the previous minute. Still, the Major did not reprove the bold youth, and the austerity of his countenance gradually subsided as the air of melancholy resumed its empire upon the visage of the boy. At length the Major said :

"There are many things, Claude, in times of war and difficulty, that furrow the countenance of the soldier and agitate his mind far more than the affections of his heart. I knew the lady to whom you refer, in England, and my recollection of her is by no means pleas-

ing; in fact, so much otherwise, that I, under sufficient evidence of course, was instrumental in the charge preferred against her before the Council."

The boy shook his head as if incredulous. The Major saw this motion of dissent, and approaching him kindly, and placing his hand upon his shoulder, said:

"I prepare our traveling trunks, good Claude, for to-morrow we quit this city."

The boy moved toward the door.

"And, Claude," continued the Major, "let Seroggins know that I wish to see him."

Claude quitted the presence of his master. When he closed the door, the Major seemed to breathe more freely.

"That boy is an enigma I cannot solve," remarked he to himself. "He is a marvelous fellow. I have watched him closely—he loves me to a fault; but, his jealousy is deadly, and exceeds that of a millet. Why should he manifest this aversion so markedly toward women? Sella Westville now is the object of his hatred, and if I looked upon another I'dly it would be the same with her; and yet, when I attempt to chide him for this conduct, and remind him that there is an interval between master and servant that must be preserved my tongue refuses to utter the reprimand, and the subject drops."

Now entered the worthy Sergeant Seroggins, who, removing the cap from his head and bowing, stood as upright and motionless as if the Major had saluted him with the word—"Attention!"

"Well, Seroggins," said the Major, "we are to take the field directly."

"Always glad to serve his Majesty," replied the Sergeant.

"That is a soldierly sentiment, Seroggins," said the Major.

"The sentiment of the Fiftieth, sir," said Seroggins.

"I am proud of their loyalty," remarked the Major. "We want true men now. Our destination is through the Jerseys to Philadelphia, where Lord Cornwallis hopes to meet Congress—should they await him there—in twenty-one days."

"It's but for his lordship to lead, and we will follow," replied this dutiful soldier.

The Major paused. He had not yet reached the subject to speak of which he summoned the Sergeant. He now said:

"Have you seen Miss Westville during the last few days?"

"This morning, Major," said the Sergeant.

"I regret that little unpleasantness," returned the Major, "in reference to that visitor from camp. I should be happy to explain to her personally how I was directed to act by that very Council who subsequently treated her so gallantly. Do you think she would receive me?"

"No, sir," responded the unsophisticated subaltern.

"You speak unhesitatingly," said the Major.

"Since that affair," replied the Sergeant, "the lady will not uncloset her door to a male friend or foe."

"How know you that?" asked the Major.

"My wife," replied the Sergeant.

"What is the intention of this lady?" said the Major. "She can not long live thus like a recluse; her health will suffer."

"She intends to leave New York," said the Sergeant, "and visit Philadelphia."

The Major said no more of Stella. He had obtained enough from the Sergeant on which to form a plan of operations, and as he was very fond of strategy in war, he thought to employ a little of it in telling his obduracy of heart. Scroggins was dismissed. For a time he sat in deep, but smiling meditation, revolving in his mind how he would use the information obtained. Then he rose and attended the mess, where his buoyancy of spirit was a matter of general remark. This gaiety could only be ascribed by his brother officers to his approaching campaign.

The next morning all was ready. The faithful Claude, with the assiduity and care of one who loved his master, had all in readiness, and with colors flying and band playing martial airs, the Major crossed to Staten Island, there to enter upon the campaign. Already transports were busy bearing the troops over to Amboy.

The Sergeant marched with his comrades, while his wife stood upon the beach, holding the infant in her arms which she had received from Percy, shedding tears at the departure of her husband. Her heart was deeply afflicted that the imperious call of duty should compel him to fight against those to whom she owed so much gratitude.

The Sergeant had visited Stella the evening before his departure. It was an affecting meeting. She saw in him the enemy of Percy and her brother, and he in her the devoted friend of the man to whom he was most indebted on earth.

"I can not ask—I must not hear, I wish not to know the regiments to which your brother and my dear friend are attached," said the worthy soldier, "for my heart would sink—my hand would fail, when fortitude and courage are most needed, and Sergeant Scroggins, of the Fiftieth, might act as he never did before; but their names are written on my heart, and should any misfortune occur to them, from me they will always receive a soldier's sympathy and a soldier's care."

CHAPTER XIII

THE FALSE EMBASSADOR.

THE American forces had gradually retired from Harlem Heights to White Plains, but not without retrieving the irresolution displayed at Turtle Bay by several severe and triumphant skirmishes with the enemy, which proved to the British that they were bold in heart, if somewhat ragged in attire.

Since the fire, the Sergeant's wife had occupied the dwelling to which the secret passage led, and, through this dark channel Stella would often seek the society of her humble and grateful friends, that she might hear through the Sergeant the gallant efforts of the sons of Liberty. He—though devoted to his king, his country, and his duty—as or led to the Americans the full meed of praise due to their dauntless bravery.

With the departure of the Fiftieth, however, she lost this truthful chronicler, and obtained only the boastful version which the British published of their own successes, which boded nothing but destruction to the patriots.

Each day brought more calamitous intelligence, which was announced by the ringing cheers of the artillery and the smiles and derision of their officers and the legal Tories. Cornwallis wrote that the Americans were so nimble and light of foot that he could not catch them—that however inefficient they might be in the ranks, they were unapproachable in the race, especially when the stout men of Britain followed in their rear. Such beastly wittiness made Stella impatient to place her ears beyond the influence of her enemies, and to quit a city alive with repugnant exultation. She almost resolved to seek refuge with no other protection than that of her slaves; for, notwithstanding the brilliant fury of Cornwallis, she had no doubt that the little patriot army was to be overtaken with far less speed than he had pretended to have exerted.

One evening, while she still pined over this wish, she heard an altercation at the door between Caesar and Ciboe, and a hoarse, loud voice. These slaves had better be zealous porters since the entrance of Percy, and now opposed this stranger's admittance to their mistress. Stella approached the scene of strife, and demanded the stranger's business.

"I guess you're the missus," said the stranger.

"Yes," replied Stella.

"Then I've a message for ye, from yer brother," said the stranger.

"From Massa Raf?" exclaimed Caesar and Chloe in a voice.

"Where is he?" exclaimed Stella.

"On the Del'war," responded the stranger.

"Come in, come in," said Stella. The slaves stood back to make room for this now welcome visitor.

He was tall and bony. His face was bushy with rough and yellowish hair, which, however, did not conceal the ill-expression of his mouth, which was one of greed and malignity, while in his sparkling eyes there was the cunning of the fox. His hands were tough as leather. He seemed one of those iron men now only seen upon the frontier. He was apparently unarmed, unless weapons were concealed beneath the hunting shirt which he wore; but he appeared a formidable opponent even as he stood.

"Have you a letter from my brother, my friend?" asked Stella, as she invited her visitor to a seat.

"Na paper o' that sort," said the stranger.

"No letter!" exclaimed Stella; "and you from my brother too?"

"I guess not," said the stranger. "I cal'late you don't catch me with such things on my person as is a death-warrant."

"What mean you?" asked Stella.

"Why, that the red-coats would hang me on the next tree if they could get me with papers for the rebels," said the stranger.

"Not if they contained no treason," remarked Stella.

"As for the matter o' treason," said the stranger, "I guess they hang ye when they get the papers long afore they read it."

"Then what is the object of your visit?" added Stella.

"To tell ye that yer brother and the 'tother chap am well, and to ax ye to go and see 'em," replied the stranger.

"How can I pass through a country overrun with hostile soldiery?" said Stella.

"I cal'late it's pretty considerable of a snarl," said the stranger, "but, I guess that them what knows Chris Wryneck hadn't be feared t' foller his advice."

This was the first intimation of the notable ambassador that he was the chosen agent of Rufus and the "other chap," to conduct Stella to them on her way to Philadelphia. He might possess the indispensable qualifications of a guide; but Stella was fearful that Rufus, in his anxiety for her comfort and greater safety, had not sufficient assurances of this man's integrity. In her woman's mind, too, there was a yet deeper fear than that, for a suspicion lurked there that this unattractive stranger might not be a messenger of Rufus's appointment.

"What token do you bear for me from my brother," she asked, "that I am to confide in you?"

"I guess," replied Chris Wryneck, "he thought the message would be enough. I rarely carry any thing but words."

"How can I feel assured," again asked Stella, "that you are not practicing some deception upon me?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the fellow, in a manner rude and unrepressed. "Fust jist tell me the rason, the motive, the drivin' power. Ye reckon, p'haps, that I ain't jist the mate to trust in the woods? Na, na, gal. I want goold—glittering, yellor goold. 'Tis what I'm true to—'tis all that I live for. The ring of it is music, and the look is brighter than the sun to my eyes. Yer brother give me goold, and that makes me true to him and you," and the fellow thrust his hands into his pocket and rattled the wages of his cupidity until his ferret eyes gleamed with ferocious joy.

"And I suppose," said Stella, after listening to his exposition, "that in devotion to wealth you are capable of selling the secret of one employer to the higher bidding of some other?"

"Na, na; na that ayther, missus," replied the stranger. "Once I get the goold I marks out the duty, and then na goold 'ill buy that goold; na, na."

The speaker drew from his pocket his hand filled with guineas, and displaying them upon a table near, he, for a few minutes, fed his eyes in silence at this golden banquet.

"Now jist look at 'em, missus," continued the exulting owner, "ain't 'em beautiful. Whenever I reckon that the work I've done for sich a reward is rayther hard upon the sufferers, I jist spread out the goold, and all that sort o' falin' loves me, and nothin' but joy remains. Now there is twenty pieces, and forty wouldn't buy 'em—na, forty wouldn't buy twenty. A lab'rer is worthy of his hire, missus, and nobody can say of Chris Wryneck that he ever 'lowed a second bid to ride over the fust. Now, missus, if you like to leave this city and follow me to yer brother, why there's nothing more to pay."

The apparent candor with which Chris Wryneck moralized over his ill gotten treasure, and the expert habit he described of banishing his amiable weaknesses by introducing to his sparkling eyes the recompense of his knavery, would, at any other period have amused Stella; but her own safety now fully engrossed her thoughts.

"I scarcely know," she said, "if I dare venture upon such a perilous path with a total stranger."

"Well, that's as you like," replied Wryneck, without being in any way disconcerted at the remark. "I guess ye'll be na advantage to me on a journey. We don't agree on many p'ints now, and I guess we should not mend matters on the road."

Stella knew not how to meet this display of indifference. She was most desirous to join her brother, still she was repugnant to placing herself under the guidance of a man in whom she could feel no confidence. In this doubt she resolved to try what effect an absolute refusal to depart would have on Wryneck.

"I am secure here," therefore said Stella, "though far from happy; but, for the present at least, I decline to leave the city."

"I guess ye doubt me," said Wryneck, unmoved. "Good. If ye likes the gold, keep to't. There am the pieces—the goold," he continued, pushing the guineas across the table toward her; "take 'em, and when you see yer brother, tell him that Chris Wryneck won't take th' goold without he brought the gal."

This ingenuousness dissolved the scruples of Stella. She reproached her heart with the injustice of its judgment. She saw the guide, whom she had so harshly doubted cast down the gold he so worshipped at her feet rather than forfeit his integrity. Wryneck still gazed intently upon the shining guineas on the table, as if he yet coveted what he had so generously rejected. This was not unseen by Stella, who exclaimed :

"Take up the gold—it is yours and you shall earn it. I will accompany you. My suspicions are subdued—my doubts dispersed—and I will endeavor to atone for the wrong I have done you by a reliance upon your faith."

Chris Wryneck clutched the guineas with a smile of satisfaction, and Stella regretted to witness such avidity; but he had avowed to her his weakness in the path to mammon, and she would not in thought condemn him even in his greed. There was a triumphant look in his hairy countenance and in his ferret eyes as he plunged the jingling pieces into his ample pocket, and then asked Stella when she would be prepared to quit the city.

"I shall be compelled to take with me my slaves, Caesar and Chloe," said Stella.

"I've on'y bargained to deliver you," said Wryneck, "and the blacks must take their chance."

Stella made no reply; but arranged that Chris Wryneck should call the following day for directions as to their departure. On this understanding he quitted the house.

An hour later, Stella entered the secret passage and sought the Sergeant's wife and unfolded to her the intention to depart. That grateful woman felt acutely the approaching separation, and explained to Stella the danger of passing through the Jerseys; but she replied that she had a skillful guide, whom her brother had deputed to conduct her, and who promised her security. Chloe was so much pleased at the novelty of removal as to withdraw herself from what she termed the "trepanance of the Britishers," and Caesar was delighted at the idea of rejoining "Massa Raf." He had heard among the badinage of the soldiery, that the patriot army were wholly without shoes and clothing, and the faithful negro had consequently packed several pairs of boots, and clothes of all descriptions, & determined that "Massa" should be well supplied with articles so necessary to make him sightly as an officer.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXODUS.

Stella promptly applied to the General for a pass to quit the city, and protection through the Jerseys. It was granted without hesitation, and the house became a scene of bustle and preparation. Stella dismissed her fears and was now all hope. Chloe, devoted to her mistress, had nevertheless tried of the situation of New York, with the little appreciation the "Brister's" seemed to entertain for the darkness of her character; while Caesar, though by no means vain, thought that his clumsy preparations could not deserve all the ridicule bestowed upon him by the red-coats.

But there was one sad heart amid these genial smiles—it was that of the Sergeant's wife. She endeavored to be cheerful under the persuasion that Stella was going to greater happiness; but she could not master her despondency. She had removed to the home of Stella, which was now committed to her charge; but she only suffered additional pangs by this nearer association. When all was ready, the travelers only awaited the arrival of their guide.

"Oh, Miss Stella," exclaimed the Sergeant's wife, "this painful hour brings back with double force the remembrance of that fiery night when Major Archer rescued my dear infant, and you gave succor to an almost ruined woman and her child. I felt toward both the deepest gratitude. I feel it now, and so does my husband. It lies in the recess of our hearts, and can never be removed."

While Stella was endeavoring to comfort the poor woman, the sound of an unusual voice at the entrance-door announced the arrival of the guide, and he and the slaves were now heard in altercation. Chris Wryneck disapproved of the arrangements, and had expressed himself in very measured terms. Caesar had saddled the impetuous Burn for his mistress, but for the accommodation of himself and Chloe, and the better conveyance of the baggage he had selected, he had put the other horse to the wagon, and all were now in readiness at the door.

Chris condemned this lumbering vehicle, said that niggers were liable to walk and ought to do so, and that such travelers should carry their baggage on their backs. The slaves resented this indifference to the ears of freedom, and there might have been some further demonstration of their joint anger had not Stella appealed and prevailed upon the unwilling Wryneck to allow masters to remain unaltered, at which Chloe and Caesar showed their teeth and grinned in triumph.

"Farewell, my good and faithful friend," said Stella, turning to the Sergeant's wife who had attended her to the door. "May we meet in happier times. I leave you with regret, and I shall always remember you with affection."

While the tears yet stood in the eyes of the Sergeant's wife, she closely scrutinized the guide, and then said with some severity :

" Be true to your trust, my man. Be a faithful protector and guide to that dear lady. I have seen you here before and may see you here again, and shall not fail to ask an account of your charge. That lady is dearer to Sergeant Seroggins and myself than our own lives, and should you prove untrue in your duty, there is not a soldier in the Fiftieth but will assist in hanging you."

A tremor was visible in the features of this hardy forester as he heard this denunciation, but by an effort he surmounted it and replied :

" 'Tis doubtful, missus, what may happen in a journey from the Hudson to the Del'ware in these here times when the Jerseys is full of red-coats, thieves and foragers, and when niggers ride in wagons that can't go byways; but I guess if anybody can make a march o' the kind in safety, 'tis Chris Wryneck."

At these words the travelers moved forward, and Stella quitted a house that she did not revisit until many years had passed away, and the liberty for which Percy and her brother were so gallantly contending, had been won.

Barb was the most happy of the party. With Stella again upon his back, he passed the British sentinels in proud disdain, and even gave the flinty hand of the guide one or two nips when he attempted to take the bridle and direct him to a more even portion of the road.

The guide was agreeable and communicative. He was untiring in his watchfulness, taking advantage of every lofty place from which to reconnoiter, and even mounting trees that danger might not overtake him unprepared. Toward evening they reached a lonely house, partly consumed and wholly abandoned. This, the guide announced, would be their resting-place for the night. Caesar soon made a blazing fire upon the hearth, and Chloe quickly prepared a comfortable repast; while Stella learned, to her consternation, that similar accommodations would be afforded them until they reached their destination, as the country now abounded with forsaken and half-burned houses, from which the inhabitants had been driven by the ferocity and excesses of the Germans who now overrun the Jerseys.

The travelers proceeded in this manner several days. Passing through scenes of disaster and ruthlessness, they arrived at one of the most beautiful spots Stella had yet seen, and here, although the travel of that day had been short, the guide, who would permit of no discussion on this subject, decided to remain. There was a small, but pretty and tasteful dwelling, surrounded by skillfully arranged grounds, and Stella was delighted because it exhibited none of that appearance of wanton injury and desolation which had been so universal upon their journey. The occupants, however, had quitted this charming retreat under the apprehension of its insecurity, and thus it was left to be used at the pleasure of the homeless wanderer.

Caesar and Chloe had been as infatigable in the *cuisine* department as usual. The evening meal had been partaken, and Stella

had retired early to the room assigned her. The guide was thoughtful and indisposed to answer questions, and seemed anxious that all should separate as early as possible. The room occupied by Stella looked out upon the lawn, upon which the casement-windows opened. The moon was almost at its full, and the heavens were unclouded. Stella sat gazing upon the peaceful scene, when suddenly the figure of a man advanced from the direction of the roadway to the house. He approached stealthily, as if he had a design in being undetected, when another figure came in view, and this she recognized to be the guide. Stella now dreaded some hostile display, but no sooner had they discovered each other than their hands were grasped in the utmost cordiality. They were now too far from the window for their conversation to be heard, but it was evidently of a nature that excited both surprise and pleasure, for Stella distinguished their hoarse laughter. After a time they advanced up the lawn to her window, and as they stood beneath the shadow of a tree, Stella heard her guide remark :

"I guess 'tis a piece of golden news, but I want to be sure of the truth afore I take hold on't."

"Well," replied the other, "I knows as how he's there. I guess I see'd him, and I guess he can be took, too."

"Where d'ye say the old fox is slippin'?" inquired the guide.

"At Baskenridge," said the other. "I should ha' gone to the Britishers myself, on'y I see'd ye a-comin' wid 'em niggers and a gal, and as I calc'late I ye'd make the best bargain, I gie'd ye the signal."

"Ay, ay, Tim Trayem," replied the scout, "I guess I see'd ye pretty quick, and soon went into port."

"And now I reckon the question is, how to make the most on't?" observed the stranger.

"That's it, Tim, that's it, said the guide; " then, again laughing heartily, he added, " how could a 'cute old lobster like Charley get into sich a basket?"

"Never mind, Chris," said the stranger, "he's there, and let us bring on the hounds. There's money in't—there's gold to be 'arned afore the mornin'."

"There's raison in yer speakin', Tim," said the guide.

"Take my nag, Chris," said the stranger, "ride over to the red-coat camp, an' offer 'em the takin' of Charley at a price, and you can guide a troop o' horse to do't at once."

"I guess I'll do't, Tim," said the guide, to whom the temptation seemed irresistible; "but ye must look well arter the gal and the niggers while I'm away."

"I reckon you 'tain't much that'll escape me," replied the stranger.

The dialogue ended, and the men disappeared. Soon after, with the clatter of a horse's hoofs rung upon the silence of the night.

Stella had listened in breathless astonishment to the conversation of these men, and now she was first aware of the infamy of the one

to whose guidance she had been committed. Chris Wryneck, it was evident, was better known to others than to herself, or he would not be thus sought as the agent in villainy. She little doubted but that some treason was intended toward her country—some betrayal of its interests and its adherents. “Who was Charley?” she thought. “Of what distinction must he be to induce the British to purchase a knowledge of his hiding place with gold, and to send a troop of horse to effect his seizure?” She determined, with no better guidance than what she had overheard, to exert herself to defeat the infamous plot. Baskenridge was named, and to that place she resolved to direct her course.

Stella dressed herself for the road, and then opening the easement, stepped out upon the lawn. She entered the stable, saddled the willing Barb, and mounted upon his back. Then, pursuing the opposite road to that taken by the guide, she gave the rein to her impetuous courser. On she went for many miles, when Baskenridge was so near; but she knew it not, nor was there a sign of life from which she could glean information. Not until daybreak did she learn her error, and this she endeavored to repair by the agility of Barb. She arrived at the house she sought; she knew it by the many chargers which stood near, and, as she saw no enemy, she still congratulated herself upon a good fortune. The door was unguarded: she opened it; it was a large apartment, filled with sleeping figures rolled in blankets and stretched upon the floor. On the hearth burnt a fire which partook somewhat of the drowsiness of the inmates. The soldiers still slumbered; the opening of the door had not been sufficiently noisy to disturb their repose. Stella, little heeding the novelty before her, exclaimed :

“Gentlemen, awake—awake. There is danger to you all.”

“Danger!” repeated twenty voices, leaping from the woolen envelopes, each with a pistol in his hand.

“Yes,” responded Stella. “I have ridden far to warn you that in a few minutes you will be all prisoners.”

“Prisoners!” they ejaculated.

“Ay, prisoners,” repeated Stella, who found that her hearers were still half asleep. “There is treachery going on. Who is Charley?”

The fellows smiled significantly, and no one seemed desirous of replying to this question, until one, apparently less drowsy than the rest, said:

“It is a name by which the idle distinguish our General. He sleeps above. We form his staff.”

“Then it is against your General that the treason is directed,” said Stella. “Inform him without delay that in a few minutes a troop of British will be here to capture him.”

The officer ran up stairs, and Stella heard him knock at the door, and call the General, who replied rather sleepily. The officer then cried out :

"A messenger—a lady—a patriot lady has ridden all night to tell you that you are in danger of the British."

"Don't believe it," bluntly responded the General.

"She speaks, General, with great sincerity and earnestness," urged the officer. "She rushed into our sleeping-apartment unannounced, and I was near being shot in her anxiety to render you this service."

"Bosh!" replied the unbelieving General. "It is only the impulsiveness of woman. She means well, no doubt."

"Pardon me, General, but this lady is one who would not have undertaken so severe a task except from urgent circumstances."

"Well," replied the commander, "not to be discourteous, tell her that I am obliged to her, and that I will take immediate measures for my safety."

"But, General, let me personally beg that you will not disregard this warning," said the officer, "for as we have no force here, our only resource is flight."

"Well, dismiss this fair Mercury," replied the General, "and after breakfast, and when we have eaten that we will provide against these perils."

The officer descended. Stella stood pale and trembling, and he feared that she had overheard the dialogue; but he thanked her for her information, and assured her that the General would rise immediately and take the necessary precautions. Stella was about to enter more into detail, and enforce upon him the obligation of instant retreat, when the house shook with the heavy tramp of horses, and, as she looked in the direction of the noise, her heart leaped in her breast as she discerned approaching at a terrific pace the well-known helmets of the British dragoons.

"It is too late. It is too late," exclaimed Stella, in agony. "The enemy is here!" and even as she spoke, the troopers surrounded the house.

At the head of this party, his eyes gleaming with triumph, as if he was the hero of the day, and that the day was glorious, rode the guile, Chris Wryneck. As the troop wheeled round the dwelling, he espied the form of Stella. His lordly look immediately abated, and, in astonishment and rage, he dashed his horse toward her and demanded:

"For what purpose are you here?"

"For the purpose of exposing your villainy, you dastardly and heartless scoundrel!" responded Stella.

But the attention of both was for the next moment directed to the commanding officer of the dragoons, who demanded, in a voice of thunder, the surrender of the General, or he would fire the house. The General appeared, was quickly mounted on a horse, and Stella saw him in the midst of his enemies.

When the guile witnessed the last scene in the drama he had so infamously promoted—the capture of the victim of his cupidity—he rode up to Stella, and, with a malignant fire in his eye that con-

vinced her he was capable of any enormity possible to humanity, he exclaimed :

"Mount."

"I refuse," replied Stella, with a vehemence that astonished him.

"Mount, I say," he repeated; and, as he spoke, he drew a pistol from his belt, and presented it at her; "for I've took goold to deliver ye won't come fairly, by the light of heaven, I'll deliver yer dead body."

Stella looked in the villain's eye, and saw that he had spoken the sentiments of his wrathful heart. There was no one to succor; she beheld only the dragoons, who were his friends, his coadjutor. She reseated herself on Barb. Then, at a rate which indicated the madness of men and horses, the troops passed onward with their prisoner. Barb leaped the broken road with the agility of a gazelle, and won the admiration of these rough soldiers. But his sweet and beauteous mistress sat heavily and sadly on his back, for she knew not what might be the next excess of this base guide, who had so suddenly assumed the bravo. A faintness soon overpowered her. She could not maintain the rapid pace in her exhaustion. The servant Wryneck saw by her countenance that she was ill, and allowed her to travel more slowly, at the same time approaching and offering his assistance.

"Vile traitor," exclaimed Stella, aroused to anger, "touch me not. But tell me who it is among America's patriots that you have thus betrayed."

"Well," replied the guide, "I'se na frien' to concealment. It's Lee. He once attempted my life, and he's got a notion of hangin' me still. Now I on'y take his liberty. See how mercifully I return the injustice I resave."

"Outcast of society and most degraded of men!" exclaimed Stella. "Is it thus you repay the defenders of your country? Leave me here. I will alone seek my brother. I am far safer by myself on these wild plains than under your wicked and abhorrent guidance."

"Another day's march," observed the guide, disregarding the language just spoken, "and I shall 'arn the goold that I ha' resaved."

"You dare not enter the American lines," said Stella, "with this monstrous treason on your conscience."

"Oh," replied the guide, with the impulsive effrontery of the villain, "I howld you as a sort of sacuraty!"

"You are an emissary of the English," said Stella. "My faith in you is forfeited. I will be escorted by you no further."

"I'll 'ave my goold," was the laconic but comprehensive response of the guide, whose eyes, nearly buried in the bushiness of his brows, expressed a fearful determination.

Stella saw the desperate character of the man with whom she had to deal, and forebore to say more, as in those unquiet times, and in

her undefended position, there was no threat that he could not execute with impunity.

Cæsar and Chloe had risen early in the morning and had prepared breakfast but when they found that Stella, the guide and Barb were absent, and that the three were supplanted by the stranger, they retreated to the foot of a tree near her room, and gave way to their lamentations. The stranger exerted himself to assure them that the scout would soon return; but the disappearance of Stella, whom he had promised to guard, was as inexplicable to him as to the slaves.

While this perplexity reigned, Stella and the guide appeared in the distance. The negroes, with cries of joy, rushed toward their recovered mistress. The stranger was not less nimble. He advanced toward the guide, the hideous smiles upon whose rapacious visage indicated to his brother villain that success had attended his midnight expedition, and soon the sound of the precious metal told that these sons of Jullas were divviling the price of blood.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TREACHERY.

Not until the next morning did Wryneck again present himself. He made no reference to his absence. He soon entered the presence of Stella, and was by her informed that she wished to pursue the short distance that intervened between her and the Deleware, without his assistance. Those ferret eyes of Wryneck testified no anger—they rather twinkled derisively—but he intimated that, as a British camp was very near, the house might be occupied, at any moment, by its soldiers. Stella retorted that she preferred even this alternative to further association with him, at which Wryneck affected great indignation, and quitted her, soon after to leave the house.

Stella gave directions for instant departure, and the slaves were about to take the horses from the stable, when three horsemen, attired in the uniform of British soldiers, rode up to the house. One was, evidently, an officer, and questioned the negroes as to their business there; and when they had satisfied his inquiries, he desired them to replace the horses, and announced to their mistress the presence of Major Malman.

Stella, who was prepared to resume her journey, heard this name with trepidation. It did not augur safety. There was a significance in this prompt appearance of the Major so quickly after the withdrawal of the infamous Wryneck that greatly alarmed her. She endeavored to subdue her excitement, and desired Chloe to introduce the visitor.

"I am astounded," said the Major, as he entered the apartment, "to find that Miss Westville is a lonely traveler through this conquered province."

"Not more so than I am to meet Major Malmain," replied Stella.

"May I inquire your destination?" said the Major.

"The banks of the Delaware to join my brother, and thence to Philadelphia," said Stella.

"The banks—ah! truly—" said the Major—"that is where we pruse. We, like you, only want the means to navigate this river to reach Philadelphia. Your friends have secured all the boats, and, as we are rather defective in pontoon resources, we are compelled to halt in our victorious march until nature shall bridge these angry waters with her ice."

"Nevertheless, I shall proceed," said Stella; "I love my country, and only find happiness with its defenders."

"Have you thought of our relative positions, Miss Westville?" said the Major, with affected courtesy—"I, an officer of His Majesty, and you, a friend of the enemy, traveling through a subject country?"

"Is it possible," exclaimed Stella, "that you can so violate delicacy and justice as to place obstructions to a poor sister who seeks the protection of her brother?"

"In war all is expediency," replied the Major, coldly, "and the better feelings of our nature are often sacrificed to this stern obligation."

"The war is infamous enough," exclaimed Stella; "clothe it not in the hideous apparel of your own artifices!"

"Miss Westville," interposed the Major, hastily, "you are under excitement. I am obliged to quit you now, but will return to-morrow. I will leave you adequate protection."

The morning came, and so did Major Malmain. Stella summoned her wonted courage that she might disguise from him the desolation of her heart. As he entered the apartment she demanded:

"To what cause am I to ascribe this detention?"

"Permit me first to speak of other matters," said the Major.

"I will converse of nothing else," replied Stella. "I want to break asunder the iron bars of this prison, and I demand to know at whose instance I am detained?"

"I come to vow my love," said the Major, avoiding a reply to the question. "Pledge me that your hand is mine, and, by the honor that rules a British soldier, you shall be safely guided to the Delaware."

"Can I," asked Stella, "by pronouncing two or three words, regain a liberty I so much covet?"

"I ask to be assured that your hand is mine, and you shall be free," replied the Major.

"And if I deny you, as I have done before?" asked Stella.

"Then I can not interpose for your release," said the Major.

"That is," said Stella, "if I accede to your wishes I am free—if I refuse them I remain a prisoner here?"

The Major bowed in response.

"Then hear my answer," exclaimed Stella. "It is irrevocable and absolute: I hate you! I defy you, too, and all your malignity! I am not blind to your conduct. You have bribed a villain with a heart black as your own to decoy me to your power; but vengeance is never dead, and it will cry aloud until you sink beneath its withering influence."

The rage of the Major stood revealed in his pallid and distorted face and in the fiery glare of his eyes. Still he attempted to repress it—he thought it policy—and he replied with affected composure:

"Why should my love be met with vituperation, and my sincerity by crimination? Why should reproaches be added to rejection, as if to make the cup of bitterness more full? Calm this intemperance, and do not permit me to leave with the memory of these charges ringing in my ears."

"I will not rec'l a syllable that I have spoken," said Stella, "I feel them all. They are the sentiments of my heart."

"Upon my word, fair rebel, you speak boldly for one so wholly in my power, and I will as plainly reply that I can not do such violence to my heart as to deny to it that indulgence in its love which you extend to yours in its hatred."

He advanced toward his prisoner. She arose from the seat trembling in every limb. He seized her powerless form, when, overcome with fright, she could only utter a scream. It was not in vain. Cæsar and Chloe were in the adjoining room. They knew the voice, and that their mistress was in danger. They dashed aside the door and rushed into the presence of Stella. Chloe, grasping a dagger, sprung to the side of her mistress, holding the weapon menacingly before the Major. Cæsar, however, saw less danger in the Major's back, and, clutching tightly the silken sash which graced his waist, the negro twisted it with all his might until both the officer and Cæsar sunk to the floor. The slave was up in an instant, and stood half-way between his prostrate victim and the door. The Major exasperated both at the indignity and the intrusion, scarcely knew how to be revenged on two such menials.

"Imps of hell!" he exclaimed, rising from the floor, "what mean you by this insolence?"

"We die for Miss Stel," said Chloe.

"Quit the room instantly," repeated the Major, in a voice of thunder, and placing his hand upon his sword.

"Chloe and Cæsar, remain," interposed Stella, defiantly. "Chloe, give me that dagger; I will now defend myself and you."

Chloe, obedient in every thing, gave the weapon to her mistress. The Major stood for a moment, gazing upon his angry foes, then casting upon them a sneer, he exclaimed:

"I am not prepared to encounter such intrepid Amazons; but if, upon my next appearance, I find my authority thus defied, I will

contrive some means of quelling this fierce spirit, both in mistress and servants."

The Major left the room. Caesar indulged in a little piece of pantomime at his departure, while Chloe, astonished at her own daring, now the scene was ended, stood sobbing beside her mistress.

Stella felt the painfulness of her position. That the Major would not fail to repeat his insults, she well knew. Escape was impossible without the complicity of the sentinels, and there was but little hope of enlisting them in her interest; still it was her only resource, and she determined to appeal to them. She therefore dismissed both the negroes, and, after spending some time in recovering the serenity of her feelings, despite the cold, walked out upon the lawn. She soon encountered one of the sentinels, and asked him to what regiment he was attached.

"The Fiftieth, madam," replied the sentinel.

"The Fiftieth," exclaimed Stella, in surprise; "then you know Sergeant Scroggins?"

"Yes, madam," the soldier replied, "we are in the same regiment."

"I know the Sergeant well," said Stella; "I am confined here for an insufficient cause, and I know if my name could reach his ear he would effect my liberation. Can you assist me?"

"In a few hours I may be relieved, and then I will tell him you are here," said the sentinel.

"Oh, thank you," exclaimed Stella, "I never can sufficiently repay you; but, dare you permit my slave to pass to the camp on this message to the Sergeant?"

"I dare not," replied the sentinel; "it would be a breach of duty and punishable. I can do no more than I have promised."

"I will tell you my name, for that will insure the worthy Sergeant's services," said Stella.

"I know you, madam," replied the sentinel, smiling. "I knew your horse directly I entered the stable. We first met at Gravesend. I was one of the Sergeant's men whom you contrived to get so prettily disarmed."

At this moment his comrade was seen approaching, and the man resumed his sedate look and walked on, while Stella, lighter in the heart that she had found even this chary friend, retired more happily to her room.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MIDNIGHT ALARM.

WHILE Stella was attempting to engross the merciful consideration of the sentinel, the relieved guard had reached the camp and was

relating to the Sergeant the rather novel duty upon which he had been occupied. The Sergeant, a strict disciplinarian in military matters, regretted that a field officer should allow himself to be made the subject of jocularity among the soldiery. He, therefore, instead of returning the smiles of his informant, reproved him for the flippancy of his language; then dismissing him, he proceeded to the Major's quarters.

Major Milman had not returned from mess. Claude, however, was there, and to him he repeated what he had heard, and described the manner in which the villa that contained the charmer was guarded. When the Sergeant had concluded his narrative he was astounded at the fearful working of Claude's countenance. He muttered expressions of hatred and revenge, and accompanied his passion by detaching a dagger from the girdle of his tunic and dashing his fist upon the table at which the conference was held. The Sergeant, veteran warrior as he was, was alarmed at the uncontrollable passion exhibited by this favorite boy.

"Why, Claude, my little friend," said the Sergeant, "what means this terrible rage? I know you love the Fiftieth. I know you love the Major. I—"

"What mean you, sirrah, what mean you? *I love the Major!*" exclaimed Claude, in all the fury of madness; then pausing a moment and looking into the astonished face of the Sergeant, he added, in comparative calmness, "Worthy Seroggins, your pardon. I have sadly forgotten myself."

"But, what ails you, Claude—what ails you, poor boy?" exclaimed the still wondering Sergeant. "Are you ill that you look thus savage? Is it pain that ails you? Surely," continued the suspicious Sergeant, "you do not love this maiden who has won the Major's heart?"

"The Major's heart! The Major's heart!" vociferated the boy; "I will tear that heart from the breast where nature placed it that dares to presume upon such conquest. I will quickly deface the dainty beauty that has been guilty of this crime. Better that this maiden had not been born than to aspire to such a love."

"Let us speak no more on the subject, Claude, to night," said the Sergeant.

"I am not well, Seroggins," said Claude; "my brain is on fire. Let me, however, see you in the morning, that we may resume this matter when I am more calm."

That night, when the revel of the officers had ended, and they had retired unostentatiously to their couches, and the sentinels paced their lonely rounds with an idle watchfulness that betokened a confidence in security, the sharp pealings of the drum broke upon the silent air, sounding to arms, while the deep braying of the trumpet called the cavalry to horse. Up rose the mighty host as if from the grave, and in an instant the clang of arms, and the hoarse voices of the startled warriors reverberated through the camp. A messenger, his horse white with foam, and himself breathless with haste, had ar-

rivel to proclaim that the American rebels, said by the British to possess only qualities of flight, had recrossed the Delaware, defeated the terrible Germans, and were advancing upon the main enemy under Howe.

With the first beat of the drum the boy Claude rushed to warn his slumbering master of the peril and of the call. The Major was incredulous.

"It is true, Major," said the Sergeant, who had that instant arrived. "I have spoken with the messenger, and he assures me that Colonel Rahl is killed, the Hessians defeated, and Trenton taken."

"By whom?" asked the astonished Major.

"By General Washington in person."

The Major said no more, but the rapidity with which he completed his toilet proved that he fully estimated the keen nature of the antagonist. He went forth, but soon returned.

"Claude," he said, as he placed his hand familiarly upon the shoulder of the boy, "we are ordered forward. A guard will remain, and you will abide here until I ascertain whether we shall return or not."

Tears appeared in the eyes of the fond boy. He forgot the sorrow of yesterday in the anxiety of the present, although he had registered a fearful oath which made him less desirous to accompany the Major.

"Should you be wounded?" said Claude, who dared not refer to possibility of a calamity more fatal.

"Then I yield myself to you, my precious boy," responded the Major, quickly.

Claude blushed deeply at the compliment, and, under the plea of collecting a few light things for the Major's comfort, withdrew. Before the morning's sun had lighted up the camp, the Major was upon the march, and Claude, his head between those spotless hands, sat in anger and despondency.

CHAPTER XVII

STELLA'S YOUNG VISITOR.

The night of elation at the camp was passed in tranquillity at the villa. Even Stella shuddered in hope, and the visions of the pillow were peaceful ones. She arose refreshed; the anguish of her heart seemed lessened. She had breakfasted, and was sitting in meditation in her room, when the door was opened gently. After boy entered; his face was finely formed, his forehead lofty; his lips were firmly closed, giving to the whole form a determined air.

"I fear I come to increase the pains of your captivity," said the boy. "The valiant Major, Major Mardon, is suddenly summoned to the field, and I can not pay to you his customary *devoirs*.

"What!" exclaimed Stella, in amazement, "are the Americans still on the *run*? Is General Washington again on this side the Delaware?"

The boy beat upon her a look of infliction, assuming that she despised all his exertment and apprehension for the Major.

"I fear," she said, "that I have approached the subject too seriously. That I have awakened your attractions too abruptly."

"By no means," replied Stella; "I am rejoiced to find that the safety of my country is assured. That the voice of that great spirit, which controls our destiny, and which has so long in vain implored for aid, is now heard. 'Oh! how I have prayed, as I passed the hundreds of burning homesteads on my way hither, that the poor, suffering inmates might feel that their security was not in flight but in *revenge*.'

"Did you forget the Major at the moment of your prayer?" asked the boy, ironically.

"In this great national scourge," said Stella, "I thought only of my country."

"You would not wish the destruction of the Major?" urged the boy.

"I wish for victory to my people and my land," replied Stella; "and such a great good can only be purchased by the destruction of the foe."

"Would you then grant no mercy to an enemy?" asked the boy.

"Not if his slaughter was necessary to my country's freedom," responded Stella, boldly.

"Have you so little mercy for a rival?" continued the boy.

"Way, he comes to annihilate us—to command us to his iron and oppressive will—and, as he has ordained that our existence shall depend on his destruction, then *let him perish*, that we, our country, and our liberties be secured."

"I suppose you would make one exception in this general carnage—the gallant Major?" again observed the boy.

"I know not why you thus impertinently name to me a man whom I abhor," said Stella, with indignation.

"Are you sensible, sir lily?" continued the boy, "that he has left for the field without sighting a last gleam upon that lily should it?"

"I can not permit this language," said Stella. "Why are you not with your companions in the field, where even your bony help might be of use?"

"I remained to visit you," said the impudent boy.

"To visit me!" exclaimed Stella, in amazement.

"Ay, lady," said the boy, "to execute a slight mission of which I will at once deliver myself."

It was the youthful Claude. He advanced close to Stella. There

was a fiery steadfastness in his glare. The playful acrimony displayed in his conversation had passed away, and the contortions of his face indicate some wicked purpose. Stella receded in alarm.

"The Major," said the boy, with great passion, "has cast himself at your feet; he has thought that your loveliness—which to me is not so visible—is of a description to warrant his admiration. It is a fatal victory to you, for the charms which have thus triumphed must be rendered to the grave. I am the herald of one who permits no rivalry in love. Are you prepared to die?"

"To die!" repeated the thoroughly affrighted woman.

"To die!" responded the boy. "You are beloved by one whose tenderness is death, and I am the executioner."

The alarm of Stella became intense. The visitor was unknown to her. His look was indicative of violence, and his menaces confirmed her fears that she was in the power of a maniac. The sound of firearms was now distinctly heard in the distance, to which both listened with interest and attention; but nothing could divert this assailant from his purpose.

"Listen!" he exclaimed; "your requiem is being chanted by both friend and foe—and while the battle rages in yonder heights we will hasten this minor scene in the day's tragedy."

Stella screamed at this repeated threat. She called on Cæsar, Chloe and the sentinels, but all were deaf to her supplications. The continued booming of guns had disturbed the fidelity of the slaves and the vigilance of the sentinels—all had fled. She was without succor against the frantic purposes of her enemy. She saw him reach a glass and fill it with a liquid taken from a bottle in his breast.

"Lady," he then said, "in this glass is a decoction of rare properties. It allays the flame of love, and is effective alike on rebel and royalist. Sip the magic drink, fair lady, and tell me truly if you appreciate it."

"What does it contain?" gasped Stella, almost overcome with terror.

"It contains a germ of happiness," replied the boy.

"I will not taste it!" exclaimed Stella, in agony.

"You must!" firmly added the boy, as he held the chalice to her lips.

"What does the glass contain?" again implored Stella.

"Hemlock!" fearlessly exclaimed the boy.

"It is poison!" said Stella.

"A mere remedy against life. A classic beverage of the rare old Greeks," said the boy.

Stella was horrified.

"I will not drink it!" she exclaimed, as he again pressed the glass to her lips.

"Folly," said the boy, "how often should I, in hours of terrible despondency, have welcomed with gratitude such benevolence as

I now proffer you, that I might have glide^d, by an agency not my own, to realms of peacefulness."

She caught at the confession, and, with a hope of diverting his purpose, said :

" Ah, indeed ! are you, like me, a child of sorrow ? Put aside, for a time, this painful remedy, and relate to me why you have preferred death to life ? "

The nearer approach of the din of battle arrested reply. Voices could be distinguished. It was evident that one party had been victorious and followed the beaten foe. The excitement without, however, rather infuriated than alarmed the boy. He cast the glass upon the floor, and, drawing a dagger from his girdle, exclaimed :

" The cup is distasteful to your dainty lips—I must apply my remedy direct to the heart."

At this moment a voice which partook of the ferocity of the battle, and was so near that it thundered through the house, exclaimed :

" Bravo, boys ! Give them another volley—give them another volley—steady—together—fire ! "

A terrible volley of musketry ensued; groans filled the air; those who had strength uttered shrieks that were heard above the echo of the arms. Stella recognized the voice that had spoken the words of command. Even the ruthless boy had paused; but it was only for a moment. He rushed upon Stella, seized her extended arm, and raised his dagger; but the terror-stricken girl, with an agonizing scream, leaped upon the boy, bore him to the earth like a bolt, and fell to the floor in a swoon.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PASSAGE OF THE DELAWARE.

THE removal of Stella from her unpleasant situation in New York occupied the anxious thoughts of both Percy and Rufus; but, as the American army retreated from Harlem Heights to White Plains, the hope of effecting this became more distant. Many little affairs had occurred with the British troops that enabled Percy to distinguish himself; but the patriot force was too small to permit a general engagement; and when the Americans crossed the Hudson to intercept the British in their designs on Philadelphia, General Washington was accompanied by little more than two thousand men.

The British, intent upon disturbing Congress in its halls, followed this little army through the Jerseys to the banks of the Delaware, where Cornwallis, unable to cross the swollen stream, encamp-

ed until the troops could pass on the ice and pursue their unobstructed course to Philadelphia.

But there was a man, insuperable and great, who yielded not the palm to the British hero. He had fled through the Jerseys, but his retreat had been slow and orderly, and, by his consummate prudence and generalship, he had made the sprawling Delaware the limit of the British pursuit. Not only this, but his busy mind was soon occupied with the bold object of striking a blow in the offensive. With an array in the uniform of beggary, with a meager commissariat and empty exchequer, in the month of bleak December, this great man resolved upon a course which removed the wreath from the brow of the proud Cornwallis and his coadjutor, Lord Howe, and placed it on his own.

One night in December, when these events were in arrangement, Percy was standing unattended on the banks of the Delaware, at a point of the river nearly opposite Trenton. His attention was frequently directed toward the river, as if he anticipated something from that direction, when suddenly he perceived, just distinguishable from the mist, out of whose very thinness it seemed to be born, the mysterious and appalling form of his old spectral guide.

"How invisibly you come and go," exclaimed Percy, as he beheld the visitor approaching, "impenetrable apparition! You almost make me doubt my competency to sustain a watch."

"You are not the less good and observant sentinel because I walk noiselessly," said the specter; "but you watch in vain. The spy you have employed does not approach the rest of the German."

"Prophetic visitor," said Percy, "I do not down to you my business here, nor deny that it pains me much to hear that my messenger has failed me."

"Adopt my strictures instead of those of the hireling knave who has deceived you," replied the specter. Then, turning toward Trenton, as if he could look into a camp unattainable to ordinary vision, he continued: "There lies Rial with his Hessians. Your General seeks to attack him in his slumbers. It is a bold effort, worthy of success. The Hessian chief is confident to rashness. He might have made his line a fortress—now it is little better than a plain. Enter his weak fold, strike his sanguinary sleep, and scatter them before this careless shepherd's eye. Be cool—be quick—be bold, and the State will soon be cleared of the despoiler. As you advance to greater victories and sweep the plain, a jewel of price lies in your way. Secure it—it will recompense your bravery."

"What mean you by this last allusion?" exclaimed Percy, breathlessly; but even while he spoke the specter had disappeared, and while he stood by the river's margin and invoked the invisible to answer, he felt a gentle touch upon the elbow. Turning round in hope, which was soon changed to astonishment, a voice remarked:

"Major Archer, this is scarcely maintaining the silence needful in movements such as ours."

It was General Washington, who, impatient at delay, had ridden

many miles in a dark and stormy night to learn intelligence indispensable to his enterprise. Nothing could equal the confusion of Percy when he perceived the person of the General; but, he thought that he could not better extricate himself from the suspicion of inattention to his duties than by candidly avowing all that he had occurred.

The General listened to the recital. He was aware of the creative faculty of the mind when laboring under such deep anxiety as was common to every soldier of the army, especially when influenced by that profound solicitude to which Percy had been so long subjected. He therefore intimated that it was now useless to hope for their messenger, and invited Percy to accompany him back to camp.

When Percy, however, had reached the camp, and retired to his poor quarters, he pondered far more on the words of the specter than on those of Washington; and although he thought that the invasion was to Stella, he could not believe that she had ventured into a country so much the enemy's as Jersey. Agitated by these fears all night, he was unrefreshed in the morning, but hastened to his duties at an early hour.

The division of General Lee—who, in his tardy and unwilling march from the Hudson to the Delaware, had allowed himself to be captured by one night inconsiderately establishing his quarters three miles from the army—had now joined General Washington, and he determined to punish the Hessians for some of the enormities of which they had been guilty.

On the night of Christmas day, when the British legions were in festival, when they sat quaffing their rosy wine and eating the fatness of the conquered province, in their celebration of the anniversary of the great Christian epoch, the sparkling flames ascending merrily from the wood fires upon the hearth, General Washington, with his shivering and half-clad army, was crossing the Delaware, with the intention, under cover of the darkness, to look in upon his revel. The embarkation commenced at nine at Taylorsville, about ten miles above Trenton; but the difficulties were so great, and the facilities so meager, that it was morning before the whole force, with its few guns, were transported to the Jersey side. Percy was indefatigable in his efforts to promote the haste so essential to success. He thought of his country, and of Stella, too, and both his soul and strength were centered in their cause; but the fierce wind, the strong current, and the immense masses of floating ice, were fatal impediments, and, in defiance of every exertion, the meridian sun apparelled with the last beat, and disclosed to the exultant men a wretched force for such an enterprise. But the Commander-in-Chief was unflinching. The order passed was, "forward!" When Percy's column reached the city, it was as quiet as if it was in ambush. He was carried to the advance. He seized the astonished sentinels—the city was entered; but the alarm soon spread. The cry, "*Der feind! der feind! heraus! heraus!*" (the enemy, the enemy—turn out, turn out!) was passed from house to house. The defense, however, was weak and dispirited—the surprise complete.

Colonel Rahl, the commander, was fatally wounded, and yielded. Those Germans, whose rapacity had filled Jersey with terror, were defeated. Upward of one thousand prisoners remained within the patriots' hands. The joy of the conquerors could not be exceeded. Tears of gratefulness and delight ran down their cheeks, and they embraced each other in the streets. They soon refreshed their famished bodies from the abundant commissariat of the vanquished, and many replaced their rags and soleless shoes from the well-stored magazines which they had taken. Percy, in common with his brother officers, contemplated the extent of the triumph with delight, and General Washington smiled benignantly at the fraternal excesses of the men.

The intelligence went forth, incredible alike to loyalist and patriot—tory and rebel. Cornwallis abandoned his thoughts of home, and hastened to the captured city. He found it unoccupied, the bridge destroyed across the Assinipink, and the army of independence gone in search of other conquests. The timid legions had now turned upon the foe—the lambs had suddenly become wolves, and were soon the hunters in the chase, and swept the Jerseys of the vaunting foe almost from the Delaware to the Hudson.

As the patriots advanced, Percy was ordered to attack a British post. Instead of finding the enemy in camp, he found him in the field, ready for battle. Undismayed at this demonstration, he led his men to the encounter. The fight was fierce and obstinate. The British, accustomed to victory, seemed to insist upon it now; but the Americans, having so recently tasted of its sweets, were equally determined on triumph. At length the leader of the British fell; the enemy receded, but retained his order. This occurred near a tasteful little dwelling, and Percy, to prevent its occupation by the enemy, burst open the door and entered. Strife was already there. The room to which he penetrated was occupied by two persons—the one a boy, just rising from the floor with a naked dagger in his hand, while near by was the body of a prostrate lady. Percy advanced, clutched the boy's hand; but observing that the weapon was not stained with blood, attempted to raise the fallen lady. She was powerless and unconscious. One glance at her pallid face, and Stella was clasped to the bosom of her lover.

The emergency of the moment was great. Percy dared not remain, even to cherish his idol. He resolved, however, to be only a moment absent, and rushed from the apartment still retaining the perfidious boy within his strong grasp. The dagger was unremoved from his hand. The stubborn British were induced to make a stand, and soon Percy saw the cause. Just rising from a distant hill was visible the grim helmets of a troop of English horse, advancing at their utmost speed to the rescue of their friends. Percy saw the danger, and in an instant ordered his men to take possession of the house, and all the outbuildings. Thus fortified, he questioned whether the British would venture upon an assault. He was correct. The

cavalry and infantry officers met, a short consultation occurred, and then they slowly retired in the direction of their encampment.

Percy was unequal to further combat, and, with his men safely housed, he sought the room where he had left Stela. What was his astonishment when he beheld a wounded officer placed upon a couch, and by his side a subaltern administering to his wants. A shriek, so piercing that it entered the heart of Percy, was uttered by the boy. The dagger fell from his grasp as he struggled for liberty. Percy, in pity, gave him freedom, when he rushed to the side of the wounded soldier, crying, as he placed his hand in the broad palm of the attendant veteran :

"Oh, Scroggins, how I esteem you for this faithfulness to your officer."

"What?" exclaimed the soldier addressed, in surprise, "are you here, Claude?"

Percy bent over Stela. The noise and the air from the opened door had aroused her from the stupor, and she now unclosed her eyes. The terrors which had surrounded her were gone, and then recognizing Percy, she gave him her hand, only to relapse again into a swoon.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DEATH-BED.

WHEN Percy ordered his men to take refuge in the house, they immediately occupied every room and every outbuilding—a maneuver which led to the disclosure of the hiding places of Caesar and Chloe. The former, unlike the valiant type from whom he inherited a name, was nearly crushed to death when a dozen gaunt and weary soldiers threw themselves upon a pile of straw in the stable which they had entered and from which they soon heard the most piteous moans and groans. Another detachment were equally fortunate in discovering in an attic the sable form of Chloe, who, at the first sound of arms, had hidden herself, not doubting but that "Miss Stel" would find some equally eligible place of security.

The wounded man now spread upon the bed was Major Molineux. On one side stood the faithful Scroggins, on the other the devoted Claude—both deeply affected. Claude held the Major's hand, wetted it with his tears, covered it with kisses, and pressed it to his heart.

"Claude," he said, "I or boy, I know you love me truly. You must be the executor of my will. Suspended from my neck, and resting on my heart, will be found the portrait of a lady. This must be my companion in the grave. Among my effects you will find a miniature of myself—be you the bearer of it to England, and to her fair hands. Tell her that the last throb of my heart was for her, and that the last word I uttered was that of Helen."

The agitation of the boy increased. His bosom heaved, and many ejaculations of agony escaped him. Then he bowed his head toward the dying Major, and said :

"Wish you to see this Helen?"

"What mean you, boy?" asked the Major, with an energy that seemed to have expired.

"She is here," exclaimed Claude, "beneath this roof, and only awaits to be assured that her presence will calm your sufferings; tell you that her heart was ever yours."

"You rave, poor boy," said the Major, "and only distress me in your hope to lessen my anguish."

"Oh, I do not rave," said Claude. "How dare I trifle with your feelings at this appalling hour? Permit me but to intimate that you will receive her gladly, and she will be in an instant by your side."

"Is such beneficence possible?" exclaimed the Major, "Go, Claude, I have confidence in you, boy. And if such a mercy can be granted, death will be deprived of more than half its bitterness."

Claude quitted the room. The Sergeant, a silent spectator of this exciting scene, who still stood by the Major's side, his own wounds roughly bandaged by himself, shook his head incredulously as the boy closed the door of the apartment; but what was his astonishment when, a few minutes after, a gentle and timid knock was heard, and there entered a lady of great beauty, clad in mourning.

"Helen," cried the Major, as he recognized the visitor.

"Lennox," was the response, and the lady threw herself upon her knees beside the couch. The worthy Sergeant impressed with a reverence from hour so peculiarly their own, withdrew from the room and went in search of Claude, the only associate now whose feelings could assimilate with his own.

Percy had removed Stella to another room before she was aware of the wounded Major having been conveyed to the house. He sent the recovered Claude to her assistance while he attended to the disposition of his men; but when he found that all thought of acting on the offensive was abandoned by the British, he rejoined Stella, whose gratitude was unbounded.

At this juncture there came a stranmer at the door, and the worthy Sergeant entered. Percy and Stella were astonished. The former recognized his captor, and Stella her good old friend; but the Sergeant was unlike the soldier of other days—the Fiftieth had been decimated and the Major lay at the point of death. His heart was almost broken, but he did not forget the services he had received from this worthy pair. He approached with his right hand on his breast, and was about to speak; but Percy caught his hand and said :

"Not a word of thankfulness. We can appreciate you without words, and you are in no state to utter them."

"Your generous natures are capable of such things," said the worthy Sergeant; "but, in another room, my Major is dying. He desires to see you, Major Archer and Miss Westville, and I know you will not deny him this late wish in life."

"We will follow you to Major Malman's room," replied Stella.

They were soon at the dying man's side. The hue of death was upon his visage. His head was pillow'd upon the delicate arms of a young woman of manifest beauty, who, with her other hand occasionally bathe'd his parched lips. When Stella was sufficiently near to hear his words, he said :

"Like too many criminals, Miss Westville, I have withheld my repentence until after condemnation; but, my penitence is not the less sincere because it is late. I have done you great wrong. I employ'd Wryneck, the man by whom you were guided hither, to entice you from New York, and for a recompense in gold, to place you in my power. Can you pardon this and the succeeding outrages?"

Stella stooped and press'd the Major's clammy hand, and said, with more than mortal sweetness :

"As I hope to be judged in a Christian spirit of mercy, so do I judge you. From the bottom of my heart I freely pardon every deed and word."

The Major smiled in gratefulness, and gave a triumphant look at the lady seated by him.

"Generous lady," said this stranger, "those noble sentiments encourage me to implore forgiveness for the violence committed by me."

"You are petitioning an uninjured person," remarked Stella.

"No, lady," said the fair stranger. "You can not have forgotten the assassin Crumble, the wilful boy who attempted your life so recently."

Stella shuddered at the recollection.

"I can not forget an assault so unprovok'd," said Stella. "I was preserved from death by a miracle. Major Archer has in vain sought that misguided boy throughout the house and buildings; but his hiding-place is not yet detected."

"I am that boy, that Crumble," said the stranger, "who, in a moment of jealous fury, sought your life."

"You he who assailed me with poison'd the dagger?" exclaimed Stella.

"I am the disguised Crumble," continue'd the stranger, "who in the capacity of servant, followed Major Malman from England. Of my real character he had received no ignorant and wretched the boy, when witnessing his distress at my absence, I avow'd my name, and was now permitted the privilege of seeking his last hours."

Major Malman looked intently and in pain'dly on Stella. She plainly saw how deeply his happiness was concerned in her reply. She did not disappoint him:

"Name not the circumstanc'e again," said Stella; the secret is confin'd to few brevets. Let the boy escape, as it is thought he must, to die in oblivion; and it, bereft of care to whom your heart is so pledged, you may be desolate of a friend and an asylum in this stranger land, you shall find both in the heart and residence of Stella Westville."

All were profoundly affected at this ingenuous conduct of the noble American woman. Percy kissed her hand. Tears showered from the eyes of Helen, and the Major was so overpowered that for a time he could not speak. When he did so, he exclaimed :

"How much is the pang of death softened by such virtues!"

He now beckoned Percy, and with a voice scarcely distinct, said :

"Major Archer, noble foe, I trust to your care and kindness this portion of my heart;" and he pointed to Helen. "She is a stranger and alone; but you and Miss Westville have hearts ample enough to entertain and protect even a national foe."

"Yes, Major Malman, we will be her friends through life." He pressed Percy's hand with the little strength he had; he pressed Helen to his heart; unable to speak, he pointed to Stella and the Major as her protectors; then, with no more effort, no more agony than a sigh, he quitted earth forever.

Major Malman was interred with military honors; and notwithstanding the regret with which Helen left the spot, both ladies were on their way to Philadelphia the following morning. They pursued their journey by easy distances, and the indefatigable efforts Stella made to restore the happiness of her new friend so endeared her to Helen's heart, that she became indispensable to the mourner's happiness. Under this kind guidance she soon regained some of her wonted cheerfulness. They reached Philadelphia, and became comfortably established. Helen became a wild worshipper of her friend and counselor, and soon learned that, in such worship, her nobler nature found a worthy shrine.

CHAPTER XX.

A FURLough AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

Rufus, though not less gallantly employed in the great work of reconquest, was so far separated from Percy that he only heard of the late occurrences by letter; but they excited considerable interest in his mind, and when he and Percy again met on the plains of victory to congratulate each other on their success, Rufus insisted upon a minute recital of all these incidents consequent on Percy's overthrow of their original aggressors, "the Fiftieth." This was willingly done, and Rufus became a thoughtful listener to the romance of Helen's remarkable devotion to the unworthy officer. Percy also informed him that he had extracted a promise from Stella that if he obtained a short leave of absence to visit Philadelphia, he should be superlatively recompensed. Rufus could but determine to be his companion, and his resolution was confirmed when, on the following day, he received a letter from his sister describing the nature of the reward—her hand—and begging him to make the gift more sacred by his presence.

The heart of Percy was so intoxicated with the glories of the American arms, and with the thoughts of his coming happiness, that he sought the most retired spots in order to be alone with the divine sweetness of his thoughts. The evening before his departure he had been induced, by the loveliness of the night, to remain abroad until after midnight. Passing through a wood on his way homeward, he discerned his mystic guardian at his side!

"Let not the warrior's duties be forgotten in the bridegroom's joy's," said the presence, sternly. "The foundations of the fabric in construction must be defended until its superstructure be completed. Achieved in patriotism, and preserved in integrity, let this land be a gigantic guide and teacher to the world."

Percy was amazed at the reappearance of this perplexing shadow. He listened to its admonition with but little pleasure; but when it foretold the glory of his country, the fire of patriotism consumed all other thoughts, and he would have replied, but the specter had disappeared. Percy hastened to the camp, wondering if indeed, as Washington had declared, it was all an illusion, this supernatural guest.

The friends reached Philadelphia, where Percy and Stella were united. Rufus, delighted with the character of Helen, became quite enamored of her loveliness. He rendered her every graceful attention, yet preserved a studious reserve, respecting, as he deeply did, her gentle sorrow for her dead lover. When the time arrived that rendered it necessary for himself and Percy to rejoin their regiment, never did they buckle on their swords with more reluctance.

Many months passed away in the services of the field. Rufus had gained his majority, and Percy his full command of the regiment. Helen, though repeatedly solicited by her friends to return to England, would not quit her beloved Stella; nor would Stella willingly spare her, so deeply was she attached to the English girl.

"It takes a long service to wash the crime from this right hand, which was once raised against your life. I can not leave you, Stella," would Helen sometimes remark.

"If that retains you, dear Helen," Stella would reply, "I will never relieve you from the obligation."

One day arrived two military letters. One was for Stella, from Percy, and the other was addressed to Helen. That for the former diffused joy over the wife's loving face; but the face of the latter was suffused with blushes, and her hand was tremulous with the agitation in her mind.

"Helen, is the subject of that letter unacceptable to your heart?" asked Stella.

"You know it, then, dear Stella?" interrogated Helen.

"I do, Helen," replied Stella.

"Does it meet your approval?" asked Helen.

"My devotion to you, dear Helen, might tell you how I should estimate such an alliance," replied Stella.

Helen fell upon her neck and sobbed convulsively.

"Until recently," she said, "I thought that my heart was in the grave. But how can Rufus ask a hand attainted by an attempt on his sister's life?"

"Because he knows the heart disowns the deed," replied Stella, "and because his sister has told him of the rich virtues of her dearest friend. Besides, he knows that if the misguided Claude ~~had~~ ^{should} ruined his sister, the same gallant boy preserved the life of her dear friend Percy, now that sister's husband."

When these friends again made a short visit to Philadelphia, it was on the occasion of the marriage of Rufus and Helen. During this period of festival, Chloe informed Stella of the "imp'rance o' that tigger Caesar." About the same time Caesar had spoken to Rufus of the sympathy he entertained for the loneliness of Chloe, and the remedy he proposed. Their master and mistress, wishing to make them as happy as themselves, consented to their union, and Caesar led his sable charmer to the altar, arrayed in all the colors of the rainbow.

A few years, when another generation of Both Archers and Westvilles had commenced their pilgrimage, peace was proclaimed, and both these valiant soldiers and loving husbands marched triumphantly into New York in the train of General Washington.

To their great surprise, the worthy Sergeant Scroggins was still the occupant of the house in Pearl street. He had lost an arm, and bore other visible marks of the prowess of his antagonists; but he was in health, and the meeting was most cordial. Percy and Rufus were overwhelmed with his thankfulness and honest love.

When Percy and Rufus reported to Stella and Helen what the British had left behind them in their retreat, they desired that their excellent enemy might be retained in safe custody until they could reach New York, and determine upon his fate. A week later, when this council of four called on the Sergeant, and informed him that it was determined that he should be removed to a certain estate in Virginia, on which in future he was to reside near to Percy Archer, his wife and family, tears stood in the disabled veteran's eyes, his wife covered the hand of Stella with kisses, and even the infant Jeopardy, whom Percy had saved from the flames, folded his little arms tightly round the knee of his preserver, uttering exclamations of unfeigned thankfulness.

Soon, all were established beneath the hospitable roof of Percy Archer, where the Sergeant made every effort to be useful. When Rufus and Helen were visiting there, which was not unfrequent, they would form a party beneath the shade of a venerable oak that stood on the grounds, and talk over past occurrences. One of the most weighty and ever-present thoughts in the heart of the Sergeant was what could have become of the poor boy, Claude; but none offered a conjecture, and the worthy fellow knew not that the sweet voice which, in later life, soothed many hours of his affliction, was that of the youth whom he had so fondly cherished as Claude.

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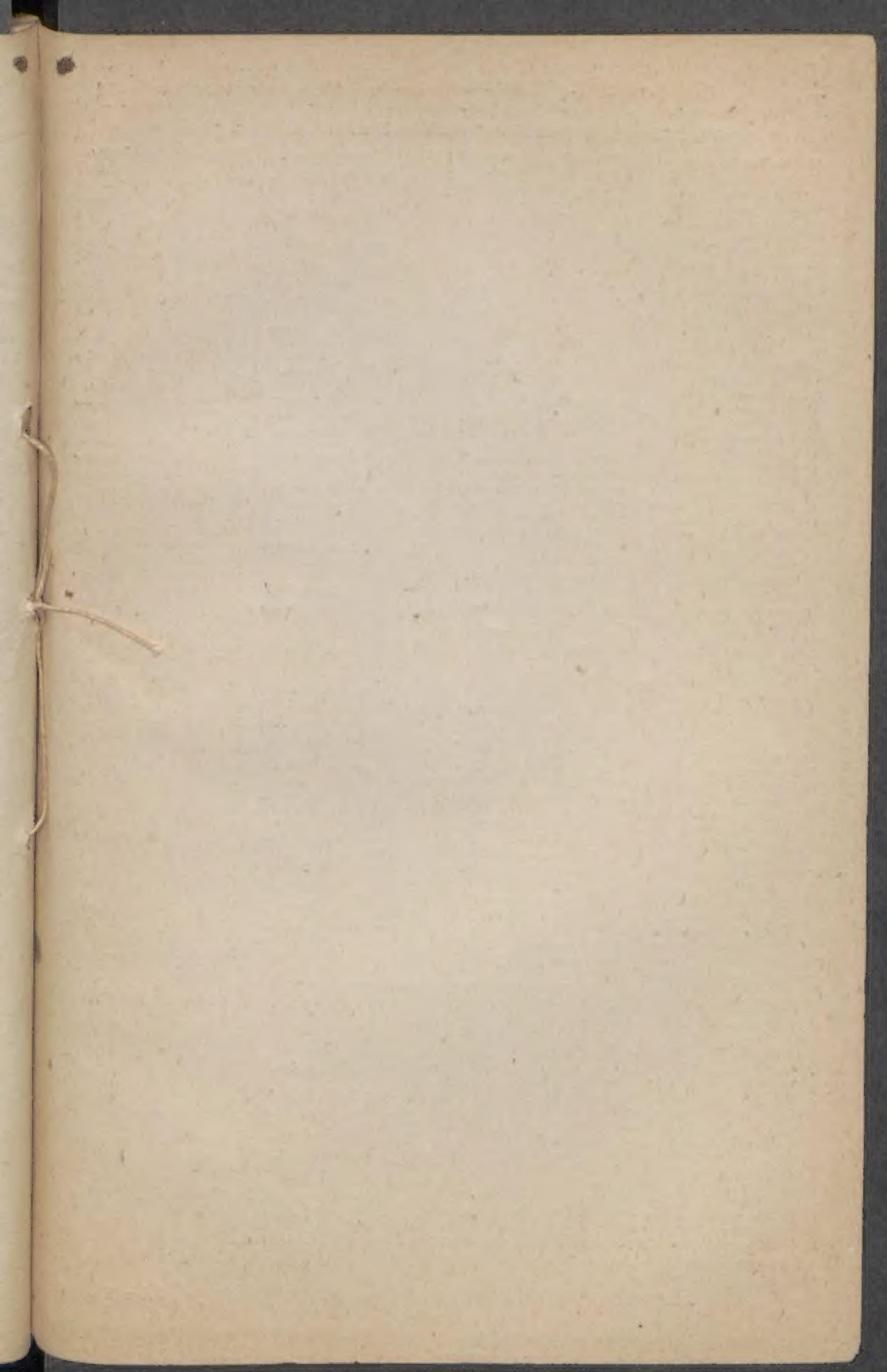
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